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JANUARY 29 1982

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## Our own kith and kin

By Michael Banton

PIERRE L. VAN DEN BERGHE:  
*The Ethnic Phenomenon*  
301pp. Amsterdam: Elsevier. £18.95.  
0 444 01550 7

ANTHONY D. SMITH:  
*The Ethnic Revival*  
241pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£15. (paperback, £4.95).  
0 521 23267 8

To get a visa for the United States in 1959 I had to complete a form which required me to state my "race". Shortly afterwards that particular requirement was dropped. As part of last April's Census of England and Wales it was at one time intended that we would all have to answer a question about the "race or ethnic group" to which we belonged. In the end that question too was left out, but it will probably feature in the 1991 census, when I expect that it will simply ask for our "ethnic group", or, should either of the neologisms catch on, for our "ethnicity" (Anthony D. Smith) or our "ethny" (Pierre L. van den Berghe).

Over the past fifty years there has been a tendency for the word "race" to be superseded by "ethnic group". The reasons for this are complicated by linguistic differences in the ways in which the two words are used, since in the United States they denote groups within the nation whereas in Europe they have usually been applied either to nations or to groups of a similar order of magnitude. Underlying the change from race to ethnicity has been the recognition that the shape of such groups is not decided by their physical make-up, as if they were social projections of biological units, but by the human readiness to utilize physical differences as signs to differentiate groups. Ethnic groups are really political units, since they bring together those who share material interests as well as elements of common culture.

The extent to which the members of such a group continue to share interests depends in large part upon the political and social structure within which they move. The political machines by which the bosses of Tammany Hall and similar institutions brought out the vote in many United States cities appealed to

ethnic sentiments. Political parties sought a "balanced ticket" with the optimum spread of immigrant names. Migrants who had not heard the call of nationalism in the sending societies answered it from across the Atlantic. Buffeted and pained by the processes of adjustment, they looked back fondly and asked, as did Robert Browning in his "home thoughts" off the Spanish coast: "Here and here did England help me, - how can I help England?" No one needs reminding how the Jews and the Irish in the United States have tried to help their homelands by influencing American foreign policy. They have not been alone in this. Among the whites, ethnic sentiment was often encouraged, provided it could be balanced by an over-riding loyalty to the state. The evidence for the power of assimilation was there in every school, every factory, every institution of the market place, and even, though less obviously, in every church and synagogue. Ethnic identities could be an accepted feature of the social scene because they were being steadily dissolved.

The readiness of people in Europe to respond to Nazi doctrines of race and ethnic unity seemed to bear a large responsibility for the Second World War. In the reaction that followed, people hoped that the Nazi movement would prove the last kick of a beast that was being brought under international control. In the 1950s it was easy to accept the liberal view of the withering away of ethnicity which, according to Dr Smith, had three main components. First, as industrialism came everywhere to set the tone, universalist values would predominate over the particularism of ethnic attachment. Second, mass communication would promote cultural fusion and create a mass public. Third, nation-states and nationalism would be stepping-stones in the path to a more rational regulation of world problems.

In the next decade these assumptions took a battering. There were outbreaks of antisemitism in West Germany despite the virtually complete absence of Jews. Ethnic tensions in Belgium showed no signs of abating. The Basque, Breton, Catalan and Québécois movements gained prominence and were paral-

leled in Eastern Europe and the Third World. In the United States the federal government, concerned that there should be an end to discrimination on the ground of "race, color, religion or national origin" began an extensive operation to compile ethnic records and enforce quotas. At much the same time, but probably independently, a section of the black leadership launched a campaign for black power which implied an anti-assimilationist programme of racial separatism. Then, in Professor van den Berghe's words, the whole country went on an ethnic rampage as one ethnic group after another mobilized, partly in self-defence against black demands, Nixon's government endorsed the use of racial and ethnic criteria for employment, housing, education and civil service appointments. Ability to claim a minority status became a valuable asset and at least one white man established such a claim by simply adopting a Spanish name.

It was in such circumstances that commentators began to write about "the new ethnicity" and to ask why in many other parts of the world ethnic sentiment seemed to be reviving and finding political expression. In the United States, Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan argued - rightly, I believe - that the American ethnic group was not a survival from the age of mass immigration but a new social form, though they did not elucidate the relations between the old form and the new. The authors of the two books under review distance themselves from this debate, but in very different ways.

Professor van den Berghe is one of the few sociologists to have taken a sympathetic interest in sociobiology. He appears to argue that all aspects of ethnic sentiment and behaviour can ultimately be explained in terms of biology. He would probably deny that this is his intention, but his book reads as if he adopted a reductionist position to start with and then found he had increasingly to acknowledge qualifications, adding them on without sufficiently revising his first assumptions. Since this is a serious criticism, the grounds for it must be explained.

This central pair of contentions is that ethnic sentiments are an extension of the sentiments which underlie

co-operation between kinsfolk, and that these are genetically determined; "since organisms are survival mechanisms for genes, by definition those genes that program organisms for successful reproduction will spread". Nepotism, ethnocentrism and reciprocal altruism are methods by which the selfish gene ensures its expansion. On this foundation a larger structure is built up. Natural selection operates to favour the characters which are most efficient in particular environments, while humans have developed a socio-cultural mode of evolution which selects and transmits favoured characters more efficiently than the biological mode.

Though human societies have this additional aspect, their culture is still part of nature and, like other animal societies, human groups are held together by the self-interest of their individual members. This self-interest, we are told, is best measured in terms of reproductive success, for it is through differential reproduction that evolution proceeds. Individuals interact competitively or co-operatively to maximize their individual fitness. They do so in three basic ways: through kin selection, reciprocity and coercion. Kin selection occurs because nepotistic behaviour favours the replication of the genes of the nepotist, so it is a directly genetic process. Reciprocity, however, is described as the giving and receiving of favours without any claim that this can be reduced, without remainder, to a genetic explanation. In apparent contradiction to this, coercion is described as a matter of biology. It is said to arise when one group of people uses force or the threat of force to enhance the fitness of its members at the expense of another group, and to result in intra-specific parasitism. Van den Berghe looks with respect upon attempts to explain ethnic conflict as class conflict but seeks to subsume them under his own argument which he claims to be generally compatible with Marxian class analysis. Social classes, he says, are linked in the unequal relationship of parasite and host.

Such contentions appear unequivocally reductionist, so it is necessary to pause over the author's assertion that "human behaviour must be analyzed at three distinct but inter-

related levels: genetic, ecological and cultural". In what respects are these levels distinct? What constitutes an analysis, and does it differ from an explanation? These questions are answered only indirectly by a series of chapters on colonialism, slavery, middlemen minorities, caste, and consociationalism, which elaborate on the view that most aspects of human behaviour are several steps removed from their genetic underpinnings. The reader is not told in what way an ecological analysis is distinct. Instead - and this seems to be the essence of the cultural analysis - it is said that there are two main terms predicting co-operation or conflict. One is the closeness of the biological relation, the other is the cost-benefit ratio in a transaction. Under some circumstances it pays to seize resources at the expense even of close kin. So on to his sociobiology van den Berghe adds an individual choice model which is intended to explain the way people consciously manipulate ethnic boundaries to their own advantage. They decide to assimilate to other groups, or to resist assimilation by them, as if they were consciously seeking to maximize benefits and minimize costs. This does not sound reductionist, yet on the next page we are told that in the last analysis competition over resources is ultimately converted into reproductive success.

An approach which analysed human behaviour at the cultural level as distinct from the biological might accept that, like plants and animals, humans compete by seizing territory and excluding potential rivals, while insisting that most human competition is conducted according to rules for which there are no analogues in the plant and animal kingdoms. At the extreme, humans kingdom laws of warfare whether or not they always observe them in practice. There are also sporadic incidents of genocide, but even these have usually to be justified on the grounds that those being slain are not truly human. Such moral rules put the brakes on any reproductive struggle and they can be said to serve a function within socio-cultural evolution. Moreover, some very sophisticated theories have been developed about the way human behaviour is related to rules, and about the kinds

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of rules which (eg, by regulating markets) will maximize the general benefit. Reciprocity is a key element in market behaviour and coercion is often employed either to distort or to protect patterns of reciprocity. To maintain that it all boils down to differential reproduction is not to state a theory but to advance a philosophy of history (which is the major respect in which van den Berghe's sociology resembles Marxism).

Nor is it true to the spirit of Charles Darwin, for Darwin, after having written out a sketch of his theory of natural selection, devoted eight years to an examination of sexuality in barnacles as the most expeditious way of subjecting his ideas to an empirical test. Van den Berghe asserts that the genetic basis of the propensity to favour kin is clearly shown by the ease with which parental feelings take precedence over racial feeling in cases of racial admixture. It should not be difficult to compare the strength of feelings expressed for their children by natural parents, adoptive parents and foster parents, but has it been done? When someone has identified the sociological equivalent of those barnacles and conducted tests that produce positive results we shall be in a better position to consider such claims.

Much of what we know about ethnicity remains untouched by van den Berghe's theses. Its historical dimension is set out in Smith's book. For him the "new" ethnicity started not in the 1960s but in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, with the beginnings of romanticism. Cultural and political movements interacted. On the one hand, the eighteenth-century flowering of secular thought introduced a sense of historical relativity; it strengthened the tendency to favour vernacular languages (at the expense of Latin) and to make them the basis for national education systems. European nationalism was rewarded by the creation of nation-states. The increasing acceptance that the only legitimate mode of rule then further stimulated ethnic settlement. So, on the other hand, the existence of national structures led in some countries to attempts to work up nationalist feeling to make them secure. Peasants and workers had to be taught that they were Indians, Tanzanians or Hungarians if they did not know it. Men were persuaded that they shared a national interest for which they should toil, while women were exhorted to bear children for the nation's well-being and strength. Instead of the sentiment creating the social form, the form inspired the sentiment.

According to Walker Connor, since 1789, the dogma that "alien rule is illegitimate rule" has been

infecting ethnically aware peoples in an ever-broadening pattern, so that Europe's subsequent history has been largely a tale of national liberation movements. Since infection is not a good sociological metaphor, Smith offers an explanation in terms of the rationalization of the modes of government leading to the appearance of what he calls the "scientific state". In such a state the bureaucracies are pervaded by scientific and technical expertise and the personnel include many of the professional intelligentsia. However, it would seem that these bureaucracies have not been so very expert because they have been responsible for an overproduction of intellectuals; those who have been unable to obtain positions commensurate with their self-esteem have been radicalized and have created ethnic constituencies so as to put pressure on the state.

At the heart of Smith's sophisticated and highly generalized interpretations stand these intellectuals, with their revolutionary vision of a new community in which the political boundaries will coincide with the ethnic boundaries. They have sought to impose this vision upon the great majority of the population, but, since they have been only partially successful, there remains a deep-seated conflict between the scientific state and a kaleidoscope of competing culture communities.

Is this not a strange doctrine to come from a sociologist teaching in contemporary London? Does not the demographic pattern in cities throughout the industrial world show that people are ready to forsake their cultural communities in pursuit of a higher standard of living? Does not recent history suggest that even the "scientific" state is far from expert at controlling market forces? There is plenty of evidence which supports the nineteenth-century liberal expectation of a dissolution of ethnicity, as well as evidence against it. Those who held that ethnic and national bonds would soon be transcended got the time-scale badly wrong; they underestimated the unevenness of economic growth both within and between nations, and failed to predict its many social consequences; but they correctly identified the main social determinants. In the 1991 Census we have to specify the ethnic group to which we belong, this will prove little about the strength of any genuinely ethnic sentiment. All it will demonstrate is that the government wishes to make market processes operate more freely by reducing the incidence of discrimination. It is being impelled to do so by the realization that inaction would be even more expensive. The ethnic group has become a new social form in British society also.

## In pursuit of the perfect

By Quentin Skinner

J. C. DAVIS:

*Utopia and the Ideal Society*  
A study of English utopian writing  
427pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£25.  
0 521 23396 8

J. C. Davis begins his survey of utopian writing in early-modern England with a chapter entitled "In search of a definition". To write a utopia, he tells us, is only one of several ways of visualizing an ideal society. There are four other "available modes". They are "millennium, arcadia, cockayne and perfect moral communities". Dr Davis accordingly takes it to be his first task to distinguish the utopian "mode" from these other approaches to "social idealisation".

The analysis he proceeds to offer is not altogether lucid, in spite of being markedly repetitious. But he seems to be saying that four criteria serve to mark it to be his first task to distinguish the utopian "mode" from these other approaches to "social idealisation". It will be concerned in the first place "to project a total social environment". Perhaps surprisingly, however, he resists the suggestion that the environment needs to be portrayed in a fictional or imaginative form, as in Sir Thomas More's eponymous contribution to the genre. A second characteristic of utopias is that they do not "assume drastic changes in nature or man"; unlike arcades, they accept "crime, instability, poverty, rioting, war, exploitation and vice". Thirdly, their primary concern is with the control of the happiness of individual citizens. And finally, they assume that the best methods of control involve establishing a "totalitarian" form of discipline, so that "the utopian mode" is distinguished above all by its pursuit of legal, institutional, bureaucratic and educational means of producing a harmonious society.

This definition soon gets Davis into difficulties. He starts with More's *Utopia*, which certainly meets his required criteria well enough. But so does a work like John Starkey's *Dialogue*, as well as a number of other humanist treatises produced by More's contemporaries, none of which is mentioned in Davis's account. More seriously, his contention that utopian theorists are especially concerned with the detailed reorganization of social and governmental institutions seems to be contradicted by a number of his

own chosen examples. He claims Eberlein's *Wolffaria* (1521) as a utopia, while conceding that it has "little to say about government". He describes *Antiquity Reviv'd* (1693) as a utopian tract, while pointing out that its constitutional structure is "nebulous" and its proposed institutions "at best rudimentary". He devotes a whole chapter to Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), only to announce half-way through that its lack of "an institutional and bureaucratic apparatus" means that it cannot "be labelled utopian in the sense already elaborated". And he prefaces a lengthy paraphrase of Chamberlain's *Poore Mans Advocate* (1649) with the admission that it is "perhaps not strictly a utopia", since it is neither about "a total community" nor about "a perfected society".

After these initial attempts at definition, Davis settles down for the rest of his book to discuss a number of individual texts which more or less fulfil his conditions for being utopias. His approach to this remarkably heterogeneous body of materials is, he says himself, an old-fashioned one. His book is indeed an instance of an almost endangered species of intellectual history. Each chapter begins by introducing us to the author of some particular utopian work, and then goes on to supply us with a brief biography of the writer, a summary of the text itself and a number of critical reflections on its value and interest. We are then ready to move on to the next utopian theorist on Davis's chronological list. Beginning in 1516 with the publication of More's *Utopia*, he continues in this vein until he reaches the end of the seventeenth century, at which point a more general chapter is appended on "the full-employment utopia" and the discussion is then broken off rather suddenly (and for no very evident reason) at the year 1700.

The individual studies presented in these chapters are of very unequal quality. The opening survey of More's celebrated work is disappointing, since it has little to offer beyond what could be gleaned from a reading of the text itself. It is weakened, moreover, by its failure to come to terms with – or even to mention – the arguments put forward by Chambers, Surtz, Fenlon and other scholars who have doubted whether More really intended his *Utopia* as a picture of a perfect society after all.

The next chapter is also somewhat unsatisfactory. This is entitled "The European experience, 1521-1619", and analyses two German utopias (those of Eberlein and Andreæ) and

two Italian ones (by Doni and Campanella). It is not clear why these have been included in a book about utopian writing, except that Doni claims that Doni and Andreæ were both directly influenced by More. Nor can this chapter be said to be a great scholarly work, if only because Davis gives no evidence that he has read three out of his four chapters. He quotes directly and at length from Doni, Eberlein and Campanella, all appear to be taken from secondary sources, and his treatment of these writers is somewhat thin and generalized.

As soon as we reach the seventeenth century, however, the discussion improves very greatly in quality. This is an interesting analysis of the utopian section in Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) and a very illuminating series of chapters on the numerous and contrasting utopias produced in the course of the English revolution. Davis turns first to Samuel Gott's *Novus Solymus* (1648) and provides a careful commentary on its account of the relations between true religion and perfect happiness. This is followed by an excellent chapter on Gerard Winstanley, the leading pamphleteer of the Digger movement, whose evolution from a millenarian to a utopian brand of radicalism is perceptibly traced. Finally, there is an ambitious chapter on James Harrington's *Oceana* (1656), which contrives to say something new and challenging about that much-discussed work by insisting on its utopian as well as classical republican character.

This sequence of chapters represents a notable contribution to existing discussions about the radical social theories of the English revolution. Dr Davis exhibits a comprehensive grasp of the voluminous literature on the subject, and in each case he has forceful points of his own to add. Although his book takes a long time to get into its stride, readers with the patience to wait for this to happen will eventually find themselves well rewarded.

*The Future of the Sociological Classics* edited by Buford Rhea (212p). Allen and Unwin. £4.95. 0 04 30113 3 contains nine essays by leading sociologists on the relevance and possible application of sociological classics today; included in it are chapters by Dennis H. Wrong on Max Weber, Irving M. Zeitlin on Karl Marx and a posthumously published paper by Talcott Parsons entitled "Revisiting the Classics".

## FOLKLORE

## Visitations from the invisible

By Graham Hough

H. R. E. DAVIDSON and W. M. S. RUSSELL (Editors):  
*The Folklore of Ghosts*  
217pp. D. S. Brewer (for the Folklore Society). £12.  
0 8591 079 2

When the well-adjusted intellectual leaves his ivory tower to mingle with the British people he finds two subjects of conversation that are both safe and inexhaustible – compost and ghosts. Compost we may leave aside at this season of the year; but here is an excellent book on ghosts which will do much to enrich the common stock. *Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate*. But are ghosts to be counted among the visible or the invisible Natures? The point about ghosts is that, normally invisible, they become visible on occasion; and apart from mere gapping wonderment most discourse about them is an enquiry into what causes them to appear, to what laws they are obedient. *Sed horum omnium familiar quibus nobis enarrabit?* Who will describe to us their varieties, classes and several accomplishments? Well, I will make a start. There are basically two kinds of ghosts: Psychological Research Society ghosts, who operate according to very strict rules, and the ghosts of legend and folklore, who are less inhibited. This distinction says nothing about what ghosts are beyond the fact that they appear; another name for ghosts is apparitions. The degree of scepticism can doubt that some people see things that they describe as ghosts; we can dispute the name and nature of these visibilia, but not the fact that they are seen.

The two classes I have mentioned are tolerably distinct. Ghosts recognized by the Society for Psychological Research have certain definite characteristics. They most often appear at or about the time of death. Otherwise they are usually fairly recent – not of people who died long ago. They appear in ordinary surroundings. They look like living people, and at first are often thought to be so. They rarely speak and their range of action is very limited, but within that they move about, avoid furniture and intercept light as actual

people would do. They do not dispute objects or have any effect on material things (poltergeists, which do, are a different matter); and when ghosts disappear they may just fade away, or apparently pass through walls or closed doors. Lastly, these qualities and appearances are attested by first-hand accounts from normally reliable people; and what is more, these accounts are in remarkable agreement; the apparitions in them rarely behave otherwise than as described above.

The ghosts of legend and folklore are different. They are frequently bizarre or terrifying – headless horsemen and the like. They appear in places with known associations, often going far back in time – bleeding nuns and wicked lords of former ages. They are more purposeful than the ghosts of recent experience; they utter warnings or threats or come to expiate wrongs done on earth. They may leave visible tokens of their presence, objects disturbed or preternaturally introduced. Above all, the records are not first-hand; the tales passed from mouth to mouth, sometimes for centuries, existing in different versions and subject to considerable embroidery. Or they are sowedly fictitious.

There is some overlap between the two, and we can sometimes see what began as the report of an actual experience working itself up into a tale or attaching itself to a local legend. But for the most part they are distinct; the phenomenology is different in each case, and gives rise to different questions. In the first case the questions are mostly about the authenticity of the experience, the reliability of the report, and the relation of the apparition to the real person it seems to represent. Is what is seen a "spirit", a telepathic phenomenon or a mere hallucination? And is it in any sense caused by the dead or dying human being that it seems to be? With the ghosts of legend and story such enquiries would be mostly vain; but a different set of questions arise, of almost equal range. What purpose do the stories serve? What is their relation to the society that gives rise to them? To what hopes, fears, resentments and affections do they bear witness? There can be no comprehensive answer. Not all societies believe in ghosts. In *The Folklore of Ghosts* an American anthropologist is cited who told the story of *Hamlet* to a tribe in Nigeria. But they found

it incomprehensible, for they were quite certain that the dead never come back, and they believed that widows should remarry immediately, preferably to the husband's brother. In those more numerous societies that do have well-developed ghost legends the motifs are extremely various, ranging from mere unanalysed fright to quite elaborate attempts at moralizing and rationalizing the supernatural. And they can be seen, if we care to look that far, as testifying both to attitudes towards death and the hereafter and to patterns of social relation among the living. The papers collected here, as befits a folklore society, are mainly devoted to matters of this kind.

They are very uneven in value. The papers on West Indian ghosts and on ghost tradition in Ulster rely largely on tape-recordings. These are not very interesting and not much is done with them. The West Indian fear of "duppies" has apparently been brought by immigrants to England, where no doubt it contributes to unease in new surroundings. The Ulster material suggests a life after death as boring as the life before it. The elaborate treatment of the seventeenth-century ghost of old Mrs Leakey also seems to lose its way in insignificant detail. Claire Russell makes a brave effort to go beyond the mere recording of traditions, and tries to furnish a psychological explanation of the persistent interest in the ghostly world. She assimilates ghost experiences to dream experiences and sees them as externalized dreams, to be explained by unconscious pressures in the minds of the living; but a theme entailing thought-transference and communal telepathy, as this does, needs to be worked out more fully if it is to be seriously considered.

The best contributions rely on literary sources. The most novel and sparkling, both in material and presentation is Carmen Blacker's on the Angry Ghosts of Japan – beings with a long tradition behind them and, it appears, equally active to-day. Joan Rockwell presents a selection from the immense archive of ghost material collected by the Danish folklorist Evort Tark Kistemoen. It is good, salty stuff in itself, and shows some interesting conclusions from it – notably that the prevalence among the unhappy walking ghosts of tyrannical landlords, unjust bailiffs and cheating land-surveyors suggests

a posthumous revenge by the living on their dead oppressors. The Icelandic ghosts described by H. R. E. Davidson are not spirits, but the walking dead, in corporeal form, who come to harm or terrorize the living. Other instances of this belief are recorded. The three papers on medieval ghost stories (Richard Boyer), ghosts in classical antiquity (W. M. S. Russell), and ghosts in the Old Testament and the ancient Near East (J. R. Porter) are all scholarly surveys including much interesting material, some familiar, some less so.

What is most notable is the great variety of motives attributed to ghosts. They come back because their wishes have been neglected,

because they are restless between death and burial, because they are condemned to walk without rest as a punishment for their sins. They may return voluntarily as an act of expiation, or in order to help their relatives, or to take revenge on their enemies – almost any variety of unfinished business may cause a return to earth – generally unwelcome to the living; though a division can be observed between those societies whose ghosts are mostly malevolent and those who see them as benign. The most impressive of all early commentators on ghosts is St Augustine, who combined an open-minded acceptance of the phenomena with a sceptical criticism of the explanations that is up to the highest standards of modern psychical research.



Yomits (Yomites) as depicted in the *Theatrum Sanitatis*, a late fourteenth-century illuminated MS in the Casanatense Library in Rome, and reproduced in *The Medieval Health Handbook*, by Luisa Cogliati Arano (154pp. New York: Braziller, distributed in the UK by Zwemmer, £9.50. 0 8076 0808 4). Such guides, illustrated and categorized the effects of foods, the weather, the seasons and even emotions on human health.

## Organizing the organizers

By Alan Ryan

L. J. HUME:  
*Bentham and Bureaucracy*  
320pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£22.50.  
0 521 23542 1

Utilitarian political theory is, perhaps, in principle, always awkwardly poised between a defence of democratic institutions and popular participation and a defence of efficient bureaucracy. On the one hand, the promotion of the greatest happiness seems to require above all else a lively, vocal and active population; who consistently remind the rulers of what they want; on the other, the formulation and implementation of policies in the interests of the people seem to require the time and skills of bureaucratic rather than the untutored intervention of the people themselves. When J. S. Mill admitted that some aristocratic governments had not succumbed to the desire of interest, he was quick to add that the defects of aristocracy had always been the defects of bureaucracy. He was like a father and like Bentham, he thought that the best

sub-continent needed no more defence than pointing to the managerial efficiency of the company. It was neither here nor there that the East India Company was not installed by the Indian people; what mattered was that it looked after their welfare efficiently, and cheaply, and honestly, in no government of their own choosing would have done.

L. J. Hume's account of Bentham's views on bureaucracy starts and ends with the *Constitutional Code*; that is to say, it is the fact that the Code's treatment of the executive is so much more detailed, comprehensive and principled than any other contemporary treatment that starts Dr Hume on the task which occupies the bulk of his book: the exploration of Bentham's interest in the executive developed, and how far he went beyond his predecessors in his treatment of it. It is essentially an essay in the history of ideas, and it will be of greater interest to historians than to political philosophers or sociological theorists. All the same, Hume is at some pains to make the reader see that the achievement he is describing is both remarkable in itself and understated in the run of the civilizational literature on the history of organization theory and associated disciplines.

The standard history of organization theory starts in the first twenty

or thirty years of this century. Henri Fayol's treatise on *General and Industrial Management* of 1911 began the science and art of rational management, and emphasizes the degree to which its principles apply to government and industry alike. But, says Hume, many of Fayol's fourteen principles of management "reproduce almost exactly Bentham's thoughts in almost his own words". It is true that only Bentham could have given the terminology to describe the "meliorative-suggestive" function of proposing improvements in "persons, things, money, instruments of statistification, registration and publication"; etc. but the need to attend to forward planning and organization is recognizable enough. Of nineteenth-century writers, Charles Babbage generally gets some credit for anticipating the work of the organization theorist; but he is less novel and less systematic than Bentham was before him.

Bentham is, however, cranky and unorganizational; he identified all organization with bureaucratic organization, stuck to rigidly hierarchical principles of organization and control, and never considered that a functionally equivalent but different context. But this is hardly to be wondered at; not merely was he not Max Weber, he was also a determined opponent of the particular

abuses of governmental authority which were to be found in the Britain of his day. He was impelled by the need to remedy these abuses, not by a large curiosity about how different societies could conduct their affairs in such a variety of ways.

A particular achievement of Hume's account of all this is the terseness with which Bentham could be described. According to him, the twin pre-occupations of individualism and the eighteenth-century theory of the modern state yield something like a Benthamite research programme into the most efficient way of administering a modern society. The thought that individuals were not naturally or inevitably bound to intermediate associations, but could be directly acted on by governments; the idea that legislative authority was the first and last of sovereignty; the consequent pressure to make law simple, clear and comprehensive; all emerge long before Bentham and all prepare the ground for him. What Bentham brought to the materials he had available was a passion for good order and comprehensive forms of classification; in a sense, he also brought the utilitarian calculus to bear for the first time – previous writers had been concerned that governments should promote the good health of the public; but it was

Bentham's obsession with accurate classification that turned a commonsensical concern with the general welfare into a matter for the "calculus calculus".

Thereafter, Hume is concerned to follow Bentham through the various twists and turns of his thinking between the 1780s and the 1820s. No single general change of interest or direction emerges; one might observe that there is something of a movement from issues of a purely jurisprudential sort to more extended political and administrative matters, but in many ways the story begins and ends with the ambition to produce a comprehensive code, the intervening years having taught Bentham that law neither administered nor makes itself, nor does as with reference to the public interest as it does so. Hume's last, and rather well-Benthamite, least, wholehearted commitment to anything like *laissez-faire*, and writes sympathetically of his concern with the minutest details of administration; what others might see as ambivalence or mere obsessiveness, Dr Hume presents, and usually persuasively, as the work of a mind prepared to follow arguments to their conclusions. It is this quality, he thinks, which picks Bentham out from his contemporaries and makes him the first modern writer of bureaucracy.

## Sykenesse and sympathy

By T. A. Shippey

BERYL ROWLAND (Editor):  
*Medieval Woman's Guide to Health*  
The First English Gynecological Handbook  
192pp. Croom Helm. £10.95.  
0 7099 2216 7

Why should yervain be an antidote for erections? Why should anyone think that "to moche flowing of blode" could be cured in women by taking a fat col, burning it alive on coals, and straddling the smoke? These are only two of several thousand questions raised by the treatise edited here by Beryl Rowland; and unprofitable though those two examples may seem, the sheer quantity of them, together with their easy availability in facing-page translation, ought to prove a lure to all students of *penurie sauvage*. What could yervain be taken to symbolize? Did cels in medieval Europe occupy some similar niche in folk-loratology to that of pangloss among the Lale (see Mary Douglas) or pigs among Old Testament Jews (see Edmund Leach)?

This "English Trotula" or "Guide to Health" is furthermore provocative under present circumstances in being about, far, and quite possibly by women. This is why, writes Professor Rosell Hope Robbins in a preface, he has urged Beryl Rowland to produce her edition straight away instead of looking for more than the twenty or so manuscripts she has

already been able to find. Not only should the work appeal, in his opinion, to students of medicine, social history and theology – he leaves anthropology aside – it also makes a point about the history of women, and of discrimination against women, and of the women of the late Middle Ages could express their female separatism and their own consciousness.

Warning bells of anachronism and wishful thinking immediately begin to clang, and not without reason. Professor Rowland's introduction to her treatise is impressively learned and remarkably interesting, but it does on occasion show signs of wanting to make simply contemporary points. Women are just as good as men, and societies which recognize this profit from it; so we have claims for the existence of respectable female medical practitioners in early times. Women are just as good as men, and have been kept down by discrimination; so cases of prejudice, punishment and communication are also recorded. Both these are no doubt true, but on occasion the proofs of respectability and of suppression seem to overlap. If "in ancient Greece and Rome" women could practice medicine "on equal terms with men", I do not see why the lady Agnolice should have had to disguise herself to go to lectures, nor why it was such a shock when she raised her topic: "to show her feminity".

The position of female doctors (or healers, or midwives) was no doubt uglier, more complicated and more tightly controlled by convention than

we can immediately imagine. And one major advantage of this edition is that it enables us to see some of the details, both theoretical and practical. Women clearly had a monopoly of many jobs in medieval Europe. As Rowland notes, Guy de Chauliac simply writes off childbirth: "because the matter requires the attention of women, there is no point in giving much consideration to it". If any manipulation had to be done, it was the midwife who had to do it, and she presumably learnt not from books but from other midwives and from experience.

Is the treatise edited here a codification of that valuable, unrecorded underworld of knowledge? There are some features that make one think so: for instance the very lack of neatness in the discussion of presentations and how to deal with them, in which the list of potentially dangerous obstetrical positions is interrupted ("the fourth mode of unnatural childbirth") by a note on the use of high beds or birth-stools, as if it has just come to the author's mind. Along with that goes a very evident sympathy with women, from the opening – which says that the treatise is written so that "oon woman may helpe another in her sykenesse" – to the remark that although intercourse is painful for some women "assume yme they be constrained to suffice wyl they ny they".

Nevertheless, for all that and for all the "authenticating" remarks about women in London, and of Bermondsey, about trial cases in Essex and on "Lightfoot the gardener", I

do not think that this book is in fact what everyone would like to see, a new collection of primary data. Too much of it (nearly all of it) seems to betray a wish to impress by complexity, to show off learning at some remove from the subject rather than simply to alleviate pain; it would follow that the author was a man, not indeed the kind of man who coined the term "Trotula" for a lady doctor – a "trot" is indifferently a bawd, midwife, gadabout or drab – but still somebody wanting to help rather than knowing how to. And the most immediate utility of this treatise, it seems to me, is as yet one more document in the history of prejudice, prejudice which furthermore appears at times too vile for Beryl Rowland to want to handle.

Thus the first paragraph of her "Guide" states, indeed, that its purpose is to let women help each other. But the reason they need to help each other is that, in the world of this handbook, if a woman says she is sick she is very likely to be despised, especially by men, and especially by those men who desire women only "for her lustes and her foule lykynge" ("her" in this dialect meaning, incidentally, "their"). A woman can be desired one minute and despised the next; sex is a disease; in women it is dangerous; in men it is a virtue. Such beliefs are not only admitted, they are fully admitted, and they are very far away. Awareness of them may explain the author's preoccupation with menstruation, corrupt humours, diseases of the uterus, and

the female "seed" which, if left unfertilized by the male, may lead to ghastly births of lifeless fleshy lumps. To this, useful consideration of childbirth is distinctly secondary.

A final point, made indeed by Beryl Rowland, is that the belief-system underlying the fifteenth-century text survived into the twentieth century in at least one tangible form, namely the smelling-bottles that once adorned every genteel lady's tray. The practice of young ladies sniffing "seem" to go back to old belief that "the vapours" come from the womb, but that the womb will return to its proper place if attracted or repelled by sweet or pungent odours. Other beliefs may have survived longer, if more unmentionably.

So many people longages and longer, a collection of philosophical essays in Scots and medieval English, was proposed to Angus McIntosh on the occasion of his retirement from the Forth Chair of English Language at the University of Edinburgh. The sections are "Language and History", "Onomastics", "Texts", "Style" and the volume includes essays by A. J. Aitken on "Angus McIntosh and Scottish Studies" and by Michael Benskin on "The Middle English Dialect Atlas". Texts discussed include *Hawelock*, the *Wuchneck*, the *Book of Conscience* and *Patric Scot's Medical Book*. Edited by Michael Benskin and M. L. Samuels and privately published; it is available from Middle English Dialect Project, 2 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9LW at £6.95 + £1 p.p.



# The Knight of Nothingness

By Victor Brombert

HAZEL E. BARNES:  
Sartre and Flaubert  
449pp. University of Chicago Press.  
£17.50.  
0 226 03720 7

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE:  
The Family Idiot  
Gustave Flaubert 1821-1851  
Volume one  
Translated by Carol Cosman  
627pp. University of Chicago Press.  
£17.50.  
0 226 73509 5

Sartre's love-hate relation with Flaubert was a compulsive settling of accounts with the self - through the Other - which thousands of readers could not encompass. Illness and then death interrupted the gigantic effort to "totalize" a man in terms of an epoch, and an epoch in terms of a man. Not even several bulky volumes sufficed to exorcize the adversary within him. *L'Idiot de la famille* remains for many readers a crushing and tendentious treatment of a great novelist. But to limit this biographical undertaking to what it may or may not contribute to Flaubert studies is to neglect its achievement as a *summa* of Sartre's own work.

Why this massive preoccupation with Flaubert? Was it to indulge in a new form of fiction? Many pages of this biographical study do indeed demonstrate a novelist's dedication to verifiable facts. Sartre invents monologues and dialogues; he tells us how Gustave's mother responded to her husband in bed. We learn about the father's "spermatic" obsessions; we are allowed to look in on the young boy's masturbatory sessions. Yet no other work of Sartre shows more clearly that the biographical enterprise is part of an autobiographical urge. The confrontation with Flaubert, if we are to trust Sartre's *Les Mots*, began in childhood. *Madame Bovary*, of which the young boy knew entire paragraphs by heart, provided the ambiguous thrills of reading without understanding. It was an early lesson in the opacity of language and in the resistance of texts. The *Idiot* in the face of the linguistic phenomenon was Sartre himself. And the title of his autobiography clearly indicates that, like Flaubert, he was to view his difficult relation with words as a life-long affair.

Precise thematic echoes can be perceived in *La Nausée*: the town of Bouville recalls Flaubert's bovine obsession; nausea corresponds to the scandal of existence; so redundantly deployed in Flaubert's letters, the can-writer can be a brother to Bouvard and Pécuchet who obliquely denounce the sins of optimistic humanism. Sartre's fiction, much like *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, unveils proliferation and gratuitousness. But above all, he too - as he puts it in *Les Mots* - was born of writing; he too adopted, through the institution of literature, a posthumous stance. And in Flaubert, he recognized his own stigma as a bourgeois writer.

To those familiar with Sartre's development, the more than two thousand pages on Flaubert which appeared in 1971 (and it was only beginning) came as a surprise, not a revelation. Ever since *L'Être et le Néant* (1943), it was known that he projected an "existent" psychoanalysis of Flaubert. He wanted to react against the stilted and idealistic psychologizing of a Paul Bourget. *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* as well as the essay on Baudelaire, formulated harsh judgments on the nineteenth-century bourgeois writers, and on Flaubert in particular. For Sartre, the author of *Madame Bovary*, working in monastic seclusion, illustrates the modern writer's *déclassement*, his escape into an ideal and ideologically situated life that allows him to hide his fear of death, and of commitment.

In the opening statement of the first issue of *Les Temps Modernes*, Flaubert was specifically taken to task for his political indifference, his unthinking fear of the Commune, his involvement in his own period. Sartre's perspective becomes more sympathetic in *La Critique de la raison dialectique*: Flaubert is seen as the victim of a domineering father, the "terrible doctor," whose scientific spirit killed God in him; he is seen trapped in a hatred of father and brother which exacerbates his passive-anasthetic tendencies, and leads to an intersexual alienation into the fictional (virile) woman Emma. The essay on "La Conscience de Classe chez Flaubert" (*Les Temps Modernes*, 1966) stresses the hatred of both working class and of the bourgeoisie, as well as forms of linguistic alienation. "Du poète à l'artiste," published the same year, focuses on his indulging in his nervous disorder, which is seen as a willed opportunity to give himself a new birth through the practice of literature. All these themes are interwoven and abundantly developed in *L'Idiot de la famille*.

The central thesis is clear enough. Sartre believes that Flaubert's epilepsy was, so to speak, intentionally prepared, that it allowed him to radicalize his passivity. After his first attack, the young man could, with impunity, abandon all the career plans dear to his father, deny the values of bourgeois society, "de-realize" the world, and then allow this derealization to become the basis of the fiction-making process. Writing was thus far more than a craft; it involved a form of suicide, a neurosis which was also a necrosis. The death wish was basically a struggle against temporality: the desire to give birth to Being without a future. This meant that the young Gustave after the seizure on the road to Pont-l'Évêque in 1844, simply wanted to place his future behind him. But this option of a personal neurosis has still larger meaning for Sartre. It corresponds to the collective neurosis, the "objective neurosis" of French society at the time. Hence the paradox of a deep complicity and also of a basic misunderstanding between the novelist and the bourgeois society for which and against which he writes. *L'Idiot de la famille*, Flaubert, aims at nothing less than a total diagnosis of the writer's condition in nineteenth-century France.

"What at this point in time, can we know about a man?" asks Sartre in his brief preface. But the man in question, who is to be explained in his totality, is never just an individual. He is, as Sartre puts it, a "universal singular." The larger ambition to see a man through his epoch, and an epoch through a man, corresponds to a desire to test complementary methods. Sartre's assumption seems to be that everything is communicable, provided we can work out a methodological synthesis between apparently conflicting existential, psychoanalytical, and Marxist approaches, thereby articulating the Original Trauma (the unconscious) - and both of them on socio-historical necessity. A person is made, but also makes himself. Sartre reproaches Marxist critics for neglecting the importance of childhood, and he reproaches psychoanalysis for ignoring the importance of the conscious will. The *totalizing* methodology requires a steady experimentation, an exercise in pitting one method against the other. It is not enough merely to juxtapose the existential, phenomenological, psychoanalytical, linguistic and structural-anthropological data. What is required, Sartre feels, is a *synthesis*, a "progressive-regressive" method, which he discussed in *Questions de méthode*. Up to a point, Flaubert is merely a pretext for testing a process: an effort toward a methodology capable of encompassing all at once the trauma, the project, and the choice.

One can understand Sartre's last preoccupation with the vexing problems of biography, with the act of writing, inventively about lived life, itself an act of invention. He uses fiction (La Nausée) to discredit biography and biography (Baudelaire, Flaubert, Sartre) to create a fictional

biographical otherness. If Sartre calls *L'Idiot de la famille* a "true novel," it is because the biographer can understand his subject's choice of self only by "inventing" a movement, that is through a re-creative act. The lesson of Sartrean biography is clear. Every life - Flaubert's is merely an outstanding example - signifies living out all the contradictions; but it also signifies that the free choice man makes of himself is identical, in the long run, with what is commonly designated as a personal destiny. And that choice, in the case of Flaubert, was the attempt to conceive of himself, while still alive, as posthumous; to renounce living through the writer's vocation, to conceive of art as a negative absolute, and to become what Sartre calls a "Knight of Nothingness."

Not surprisingly, Sartre sees Flaubert as a prophet of modernity whose dream of writing a "book about nothing" - a book held together through the sheer power of structure and style - made him a forerunner of Mallarmé and of the practitioners of the *nouveau roman*. There is much in Flaubert's writings to confirm such a view. His theory and his practice seem to proclaim the intransitive nature of literature, its undecidability, the elusiveness of any supposed centre of meaning, the self-referential nature of the textual space. Tragedy, for him, resides in the act of writing; it is to be found in the subject's incommunicability. Flaubert, in this Sartrean perspective, is haunted by the crisis of the sign, the hiatus between any verbal expression and that which it seeks to express, the double discredit of signifier and signified.

The unfinished *Bouvard et Pécuchet* was the logical outcome of these problematics of textuality. But it all started much earlier. Revealingly, Sartre planned to end his study with 1857, the year of Flaubert's first published novel, *Madame Bovary*. *L'Idiot de la famille*, as it now stands, never even got to that point, it hardly matters. For it is all there, at the beginning. Sartre's greatest originality rests on his reading of Flaubert's unpublished juvenilia. Some of these texts, written between

the ages of fourteen and sixteen ("Quidquid volueris... Un parfum à sentir," "La Peste à Florence," "Passion et vertu"), have never been read with such acuity. These are masterful, if at times tendentious, discussions of the major themes: the horror of procreation, the option of sterility, dreams of parricide, the impossibility of unmediated desire, the love of the impossible, negativity as a form of the absolute. And even though Sartre, in his published text, never gets to *Madame Bovary*, he offers us a stupendous preview: the extraordinary analysis of the *staccato* episode - a pungent, searching, inspired textual confrontation, a memorable text on a great page of fiction.

Hazel E. Barnes's *Sartre and Flaubert* provides expert guidance through the thousands of pages of *L'Idiot de la famille*. Even if this book were only a skillful paraphrase and critical distillation, it would perform a signal service. But it does much more. It is an authoritative, clear, elegant presentation of complex issues. Barnes has performed the tour de force of entering into Sartre's mental world, while remaining critically objective. She puts her finger unerringly on the originality of Sartre's contribution, but never indulges in hero-worship. She frequently corrects Sartre's excesses, measures his opinions against those of other Flaubert critics, and engagingly. Her own arguments (she has read Flaubert with great care) lend support to Sartre's central theses. She shrewdly points out where it is that Sartre has overstated his case, displays throughout a fine literary sensibility, and succeeds in keeping difficult questions in sharp perspective. Her discussion of Sartre and Flaubert's *Saint Julien l'Hospitalier* - so important because of the intertwining motifs of monasticism, parricide, and sainthood - is particularly interesting.

Simultaneously with *Sartre and Flaubert* we also have the first volume of a projected five-volume translation of *L'Idiot de la famille* by

Carol Cosman. When it comes translations, especially of such length, one obviously wants to be generous allowances. Some of the clumsy renditions, some of the misreadings of the original, Cosman succeeds, not in making Sartre say what he says, in some cases, the text falls into downright absurdity. The following are just a few examples.

"N'a point d'âme qui veut... comes 'he who wills has no soul' (220); 'il faut susciter les vocations' upgraded" (p. 55); 'qui tient de la snobisme' reads as 'resulting in the willful murder' (p. 205); 'qui a fait du bon honneur' is inverted into 'decidant de lui ouvrir l'esprit' (p. 205); 'une intention autodéfinissante de peupler lui échapper' is twisted into 'an intention of self-defence which he could not escape' (p. 205); 'Va-t-elle rompre?' is metamorphosed into 'Is she going to collapse?' (p. 422). There is much more...

Some of the renditions seem worse than a misunderstanding of the French. Thus *Pingouin* (with capital P), the well known male protagonist of Voltaire's tale by the name, finds himself sexually transformed into the feminine "ingame." As for Flaubert's father, a former "bourgeois d'Empire" (a fellow student under Napoleon), he is turned by the inventive translator who mistakes *bourse*-fellowship for *speculation* of the Empire" (p. 339). Yet Sartre makes a point of telling how the future chief surgeon of the Rouven hospital had been encouraged in his studies by Bonaparte!

Poor Sartre! And poor reader! Four more volumes of this translation are scheduled to appear. Let us hope that they will be translated with greater accuracy.

## THEATRE

BRIAN VICKERS (Editor):  
Shakespeare  
The Critical Heritage  
Routledge and Kegan Paul  
Volume 1 1623-1692  
448pp. £18.  
0 7100 7716 5

Volume 2 1693-1733  
549pp. £18.  
0 7100 7807 2

Volume 3 1733-1752  
487pp. £18.  
0 7100 7990 7

Volume 4 1753-1765  
583pp. £18.  
0 7100 8297 5

Volume 5 1765-1774  
569pp. £18.  
0 7100 8788 8

Volume 6 1774-1801  
650pp. £22.50.  
0 7100 0629 2

Did Ophelia, besides her other woes, suffer from bad breath? In Shakespearean commentary no suggestion - however trivial, *outré*, obnoxiously wrong-headed or ludicrously ill-informed - is out of bounds. That is one reason Shakespeare presents such a unique challenge, at once inspiring and depressing to the historian of criticism. As for the issue of Ophelia's breath, we find it surfacing not, as we might expect, in an age of oral hygiene, but in 1698, in Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*. Shakespeare should have drowned Ophelia sooner, he suggests: "To keep her alive only to sully her Reputation, and discover the Rankness of her Breath, was very cruel." Collier's heavy-handed sarcasm did not go unnoticed. The next year James Drake came to Ophelia's defence in *The Ancient and Modern Stage Survey'd*: "Nay, Mr Collier is so familiar with her as to make an unkind discovery of the no Body suspected before. But it may be this is a groundless surmise, and Mr Collier is deceived by a bad Nose, or a rotten Tooth of his own."

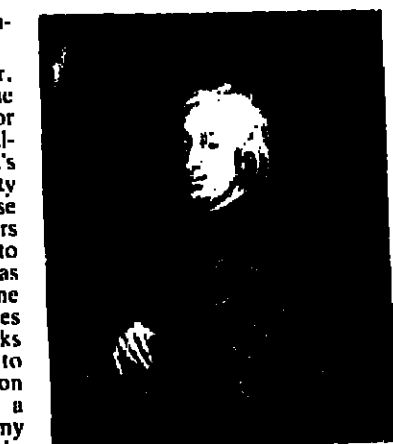
Collier notices Shakespeare only passing - the reference to Ophelia, another to Falstaff. That Brian Vickers should find space for snippets from a controversialist's polemic against the stage of his own day testifies to the extraordinary breadth of this *Critical Heritage* round-up. A special commitment underlies the contents of these six substantial volumes. Vickers stands at the opposite end of the spectrum from such other historians as Arthur W. G. Eastman, who defends his strategy thus in his brief *Short History of Shakespearean Criticism* (1968):

In military history, said A. W. Schlegel, we do not give the name of every soldier who fought in the files of the hostile armies: "we speak only of generals, and those who performed actions of distinction." The same truth applies to the history of Shakespearean criticism. Vickers finds space - lots of space - for the foot soldiers, and even for some guerrilla partisans. His aim was to present "an integrated picture" of the vicissitudes of Shakespeare's reception in England; one that would include, besides formal criticism, the major adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, theatrical notices (both of the original texts and of revampings), and textual criticism.

Despite this amplitude, Vickers allows himself exclusions. He gives short shrift to the abundance of documented coronation ceremonies parallel to the Ne 1769; even shorter shrift to a single paragraph in which he manages to confuse William Henry Ireland with his father Samuel - to the great Shakespeare Forgery that enthralled London as the century drew to a close. Still, Vickers had to draw the line somewhere. Readers may well feel he should have drawn it more ruthlessly all along. Do we really need three pages of Samuel Badcock, dissenting minister and co-

# A national religion established

By S. Schoenbaum



Early interpreters of Shakespeare: John Dryden (left), David Garrick (centre) and George Steevens. All three pictures are in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

pious reviewer, on the 1778 Johnson-Steevens Shakespeare?

These volumes tend to get fatter, although not uniformly so, as the series moves along: 448 pages for Volume 1, 650 for the last instalment. All told, 309 entries; God's plenty. Yet it is the reviewer's duty to note that - as all users of these books cannot but be aware - Vickers has concluded without bringing to completion an undertaking which has occupied him for a decade. In the General Editor's Preface, five times repeated, B. C. Southam remarks that the collection is intended to chronicle Shakespeare's "reception and reputation extensively, over a span of three centuries". By my arithmetic that would bring us roughly to 1923. Perhaps that was never Vickers's own expectation. Indeed, in a final personal note he ruefully confesses that he "imagined that six volumes would be enough to take the story down to 1832". Hazlitt published his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* in 1817, and Coleridge himself saw through the press appeared, respectively, in 1817 and 1818. Vickers had thus hoped to end with these and other Romantic luminaries. As things stand, he concludes on a note of desecration at 1798-1801 with brief selections from William Richardson, Nathan Drake and Arthur Murphy. The miscellany, we are informed, resulted from the quantity and interest in eighteenth-century material Vickers unexpectedly turned up. Such are the penalties and rewards of scholarship, and the editor must count himself fortunate in having had his publisher's go-ahead. Whether his readers will fully share such gratitude may be open to question. I do not myself doubt that Vickers could have come up with an entirely responsible, and probably more shapely, survey in the six volumes allotted him had he resisted certain temptations. Exclusion, no less than admission, is after all part of the editor's task.

The first volume surveys the period from the publication of the 1623 Folio until the performance of *The Fairy Queen* - an operative version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, possibly by Elkanah Settle, with music by Purcell - in 1692. This is the longest span covered by any single instalment, and critically the most barren. We begin with Ben Jonson's poem in memory of his beloved, probably the most celebrated eulogy in the language, but one which (as Vickers reminds us) Dryden would disparage as "An insolent, Sparing, and Invidious Panegyric". Others have taken differing views in a debate which reverberates to the present day. Rovers provided touchstones for future inquiry: "thou hadst small Latin and less Greek", for example, which sometimes became "small Latin and little Greek" - not precisely the same thing - or even, in Samuel Johnson's 1765 Preface, "small Latin, and no Greek". Vickers reproduces brief, scattered comments from the commonplace book, c. 1655, of Abraham Wright, Vicar of Okeham, averring that *Hamlet* is but "an indifferently play, but doesn't mean; and in nothing like *Othello*"; the gravediggers' scene has its points, Wright says, but doesn't compare with a little number like Thomas Randolph's *Jealous Lovers*. Brief Diary entries from Peeps follow - on the way to *Deipnosophists* - water on August 20, 1666 had read *Othello*, which he had "heretofore esteemed a mighty good play, but having so lately read *The Adventures of Five Hours*, it seems a mean thing". Clearly the curtain is being yet begun to rise on Bardolatry, a later - and most consequential - part of Vickers's story.

In the absence of anything like formal criticism, he gives many of his early pages to theatrical adaptations. He even finds space for Dryden's *All for Love*, which, although "a vile imitation of Shakespeare's *Titus*", is the line somewhere. Readers may well feel he should have drawn it more ruthlessly all along. Do we really need three pages of Samuel Badcock, dissenting minister and co-

cant, from the standpoint of theatrical history, is Nahum Tate's *King Lear*, in which the reviser hit upon the happy expedient of having "run through the whole *A Love betwixt Edgar and Cordelia*, that never chang'd word with each other in the Original". Tate's *Lear*, signalling the ascendancy of neoclassical predispositions, would hold the stage without rival for a century and a half.

In subsequent volumes, adaptations usurp less space. They fall off numerically, and anyway Vickers has other fish to fry. Should he have included them in the first instance? I have mixed feelings. Plays by their very nature tend to take a lot of printed space, and the anthologist is abridging by nature drawn to the most striking innovations. What the adapter keeps, however, is also part of the story, and all sorts of small alterations - brief excisions, transpositions, substitutions of phrase - contribute to the overall effect. Vickers himself seems defensive on this score, allowing that he would have preferred to give some adaptations entire. Perhaps he should have done so, and summarized (with illustrative quotation) the others. In any event, I would agree that the adaptations have a place here. They affected the sensibilities of critics and editors; without them the theatrical notes of Arthur Murphy, George Steevens, and others, which sometimes hold much interest, would have been reproduced in vacuo.

The pot finally comes to a boil over Garrick. Perhaps the most unsettling - and certainly least general - familiar - of his popular adaptations is his *Hamlet*. Garrick torpedoes most of Act 4, scenes 5-7, and does most of Act 5, reducing the 1,002 lines to 104, and adding 37 of his own Shakespearean invention. Out of deference to neoclassic aversion to mixing the genres, he denies his audience those crowd-pleasers, the gravediggers. *Hamlet* never goes off to England, so no ambassador need dispense with the fencing match and the poisoned rapiers and wine, hence also with Oric; in the end *Hamlet* - so the stage direction reads - "rises upon *Laertes's sword and falls*". The Queen flees and falls into a trance; thus did Garrick, as he boasted to an acquaintance, rescue "that noble play from all the rubbish of the 5th act". Yet otherwise he showed greater respect for the text than his stage-manager predecessors. Garrick's *Hamlet* became a box-office triumph at Drury Lane. Walpole raved, but Voltaire applauded.

Vickers sees this gastrated affair as "the most remarkable adaptation of the period, and the greatest source of controversy to date". Accordingly, he makes it this centre piece for his discussion of Garrick in Volume 3. Vickers reproduces all the notices he has managed to put together. Of the adaptation itself, though, he gives only the portion from 4.5.125 (*Laertes's demand to know where his father is*) to the end; five pages here! It is only the second time that this text, which survives in a Folger Library manuscript, has been printed anywhere.

In his own time the charismatic Garrick inspired extraordinary aqua-

tion, although he had his detractors. Vickers painstakingly attempts a balanced view, and I think succeeds, giving attention even to Garrick's role as a collector of old plays, to which, after an assessment of the evidence, he accords unstinting praise. His handling here typifies his judicious way with his materials throughout. Vickers gives - for example - a similarly balanced estimate of Johnson's Preface to his 1765 *Shakespeare*, on which so much scholarly ink has been split.

In broad outline the story these volumes chronicle is familiar enough, but it is given a special resonance in the *Critical Heritage* by reason of the rich contextual framework which Vickers uses to set off the key critical exhibits. The Frenchified taste-makers of the Restoration, themselves ruled by the rules, shook their heads over Shakespeare's free-wheeling violations of the unities, decorum, and poetic justice. In a notorious passage Thomas Rymer in 1693 drew his own moral from *Othello* with savage glee:

1. First, This may be a caution to all Maidens of Quality how, without their Parents consent, they run away with Blackmoors. . . .  
2. Secondly, This may be a warning to all good Wives that they look well to their Linnen. . . .  
3. Thirdly, This may be a lesson to Husbandmen, that before their Jealousie be Tragical: the proofs may be Mathematical.

By and large, Rymer - that venomous insect (as Chidow saw him) - received a respectful hearing. Still, the plays themselves did not fail to transport readers, nor to move theatre audiences to tears and laughter. And, in general, Shakespeare paid little heed to Time and Place, did not Unity of Character, which he never failed to preserve, matter much more? The most quotable passages were gathered together and popularly disseminated. William Dodd, the clergyman editor of *The Christian Magazine*, published *The Beauties of Shakespeare* in two volumes in 1752 - an anthology that went through numerous editions and remained in print long after its compiler had been hanged for forgery. Others, enumerated Shakespeare's faults with equivalent relish. The tension between neoclassical theory

YOU THE MIND OF WILLIAM JAMES.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY

WILLIAM JAMES  
Frederick Burkhardt, General Editor; Fredson Bowers, Textual Editor  
Introduction by Gerald E. Myers and Rand B. Evans

Harvard is proud to publish the first fully accurate edition of *The Principles of Psychology*. William James's masterpiece that marked a turning point in the development of psychology as a science in America. This handsome edition, containing eighty-eight drawings from the original text, corrects the hundreds of errors that have been perpetuated over the years. And incorporates all of the changes that the author made in the eight printings that appeared in Volumes I and II. Volume III includes extensive notes, appendices, textual apparatus, and a general index.

Volumes I and II 1392 pp., 88 illus. £35.00, the two-volume set. Volume III 480 pp., £17.50.

This is the eighth publication in the *Works of William James* series, sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies. It has been awarded the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for Best Scholarly Edition. Series editor: Fredson Bowers. Textual Editor: Ignace K. Skupski. Associate Editor: Frederick Burkhardt, General Editor.

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and Shakespearean practice runs through the criticism of the period. Pope is typical: while praising Rymer as "on the whole, one of the best critics we ever had", he can yet allow that "To judge . . . Shakespeare by Aristotle's rule is like trying a man by the Laws of one Country who acted under those of another." Long before the century was out, the English public had rendered up its foregone verdict. "With us islanders Shakespeare is a kind of established religion," in poetry. Thus, Arthur Murphy in 1753 admonished the most formidable anti-Shakespearean of the Enlightenment, Voltaire himself.

An established church requires an authorized version of Holy Writ. The apostolic succession of eighteenth-century editors, from Rowe in 1709 to Steevens and others in 1793, packaged and re-packaged Shakespeare for evolving tastes, and consolidated and amplified knowledge. Simultaneously, buildings and greenery appealed to express editorial sensibility. Shakespearean drama reminds Pope of "an ancient majestic piece of Gothic Architecture compared with a neat Modern building. . . . It has much the greater variety, and much the nobler apartments; that we are often conducted to them by dark, odd, and uncouth passages." In Shakespeare, for Theobald, "as in great Piles of Building . . . some Parts are made stupendously magnificent and grand, to surprize with the vast Design and Execution of the Architect; others are contracted, to amuse you with his Neatness and Elegance in little." To Johnson, Shakespeare was a forest rather than a formal garden; "oaks extend their branches and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses."

While uniminted by established reputations, Vickers has his own unconventional editorial heroes — Charles Jennens, for example, who

truly appreciated the importance of textual collation and exactness, and correctly took the measure of that unconscionable intimidator Steevens. Historians (myself included) have too often failed to take Jennens seriously enough, although anybody who undertakes to publish a book anonymously and embellishes it with a fulsomely appreciative dedication to himself invites mistrust.

Theobald presents a weightier case. He was singularly unfortunate in both his friendships and his enmities. In *Shakespeare Restored* (here generously excerpted) he gave a *Specimen of the Many Errors, As well Committed, as Unintended, by Mr. Pope in his Late Edition of this Poet*. Pope vented his understandable fury by making Theobald the hero of the first *Dunciad*, yet at the same time didn't hesitate to avail himself of many of Theobald's readings when a new edition of his own *Shakespeare* was called for. Theobald's relations with another fellow Shakespeare editor, the terrible William Warburton, were psychologically more complex. Theobald deferred obsequiously to Warburton, in every way his inferior, and in correspondence — dedicated gratitude for fellowship he took to be "the offspring of a truly generous mind." But Warburton's mind knew no generosity, nor did Christian charity lurk in the bosom of the divine who would be elevated to the seat of Gloucester. His emendations, offered with breathtaking arrogance and dogmatism, made him the laughing-stock of the cognoscenti.

Theobald is best appreciated for such happy readings as "a babble [Folio: 'a Table'] of green fields" in *Henry V*, and Macbeth's "bank and shoal [Folio: 'Schoole'] of time"; but he played a grander role than these would suggest. Vickers, surely correctly, sees Theobald as a pioneering theoretician and practitioner of "total editing." His gifts did not go unrecognized in his own day, but

they were not sufficiently recognized, and he had the further misfortune of suffering Johnson's terrible, and amply disseminated, censure as "a man of narrow comprehension and small acquisitions"; ignorant, faithless, and petulant. In the *Critical Heritage* the process of rehabilitation, already well under way, proceeds apace.

Edward Capell, the last of Vickers's heroes, is the one that in the end he has come most to admire for his combination of intelligence, good sense, enormous range of learning, minute accuracy, scrupulousness of detail, and the ability to visualize a text in theatrical terms, a grasp of its totality which is rare in any age and was unique in his own. High praise indeed, from a critic not given to superlatives, and justified by his selections. Also a judgment not easily arrived at, for Capell, like Theobald — but in a different way — was his own worst enemy. An enthusiast of typographical excellence, he refused to disfigure his pages with notes, and so reserved them for separate publication, with other ancillary materials, in the over 1,800 mostly double-column pages of his *Notes and Various Readings to Shakespeare*, which I have found, I dare say like others, a nightmare to consult. Capell's ungainly prose style also didn't help matters. "If he had come to me," Johnson confided in Boswell, "I would have endeavored to endow his purposes with words; for, as it is, he doth gabble monstrously." Yet Capell gave of himself prodigiously to his life's work; report holds that he transcribed all of Shakespeare ten times over. At last, in our time, recognition has belatedly come, first twenty years ago, in an essay by Alice Walker hailing Capell as "a neglected Shakespearean," to whom indeed we owe the very word "Shakespearean." Eastman, to be sure, fails to mention Capell, but now that he has been promoted by Vickers to general, and

decorated for valour in the field, awareness of his achievement should be quickly spreading to a large, non-specialist audience.

Vickers includes a good sampling from Capell, and for the others, from Pope onwards, he supplements the editor's introduction with some of the notes, which are in places more provocative and informative (besides being more difficult of access) than the introductions themselves. Picking and choosing must have been a prodigious task. Vickers himself lightly annotates his own texts; too lightly maybe: not every one can be counted on to know that Sir Paul Pliant (cited by Aaron Hill here) is a character in Congreve's *The Double Dealer*. But Vickers is, I suspect, merely deferring to *Critical Heritage* policy in such matters. He translates Latin quotations, and — an especially welcome feature — cites their precise origins. (No identifications are offered of the Shakespeare portraits on the jackets. This is a pity — few readers will, I imagine, know that the one for Volume 3, for example, reproduces the handsome Janssen likeness that now hangs at the Folger.) My spot-checks of the texts themselves confirm Vickers's praiseworthy scrupulousity. His headnotes to the 309 selections are concisely informative.

In his six general introductions he is never merely perfunctory, nor does he patronize the uninitiated reader, who may sometimes feel he has been given more than he bargained for. Vickers's last introduction runs to almost ninety pages, including twenty of documentation. Like everybody else, Vickers makes mistakes, which he hastens to correct. Thus, he concludes Volume 4 with a notice, from the *Critical Review* (1765), which he confidently entitles, "George Steevens on restoring Shakespeare's text." It is always dangerous to ascribe ephemeral jour-

nalistic pieces on the basis of style, and here Vickers comes a cropper; in the next volume he correctly attributes the item to William Gifford. No edifice of critical speculation collapses and has to be rebuilt as a result, but such details have their own interest — say, for the biographer of Steevens. That great and harmful eccentric deserves a biography.

A measure of the success of an anthology of any kind is its capacity to tease one into looking beyond its covers. That happened to me more than once — for example, when I encountered Charlotte Lennox in Volume 4. She isn't any great shakes as a critic, but the headnote and extracts intrigued me, so I looked into her career and laid hands on the three volumes of her *Shakespeare Illustrated* (1753, 1754). Born in Albany, New York, Mrs Lennox took up literary life in London. She translated from French, wrote plays, poems and romances, and helped edit a monthly magazine, *The Ladies Museum*. Johnson befriended her, and crowned her with laurel at a "debauch" at the Devil Tavern; in his *Dictionary* he cites Charlotte under "Talent" — attentions which, Mrs Thrale reports, turned her head. Johnson composed the elaborate dedication running to ten printed pages — one of half a dozen he did her — which graces *Shakespeare Illustrated*. "My Sex, my Age," has her protest, "have not given me many Opportunities of mingling in the World." Still, she didn't do too badly for a time, before dying in penury in 1804.

Vickers leaves his readers with an impressive addition to the Shakespeare shelf. Hardly anyone, I expect, will read these volumes through seriatim, but they will be frequently consulted for edification and sometimes even entertainment.

any point. She fails also to mention the existence of such plays as the popular *Shoemakers' Holiday*, which were written to appeal particularly to citizens. She sees the "impossible plot" of Ralph's play in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* as being intended to ridicule citizens' lack of experience of drama. In fact, it is a parody of such plays as *The Four Gentlemen of London*, where apprentices are unironically transformed into the heroes of romance. It is difficult to understand how a piece parodying citizens' taste in plays can be used to prove that they were not theatre-goers.

Like many revisionist studies, this book overstates its case. Ms Cook persuades us that gentlemen came regularly to the theatres; it is a pity that she also felt obliged to argue that other people hardly came at all.

# Coming to terms with the Eye

By Alan Coren

HELEN THURBER and EDWARD WEEKS (Editors):  
Selected Letters of James Thurber  
274pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.  
0 241 10706 7

Even under normal posthumous circumstances, writers' widows are the last people who should be let loose on the dusty shoe-boxes, the escritoire pigeon-holes, the begging-letter columns of literary weeklies: the wife of a deceased husband's correspondence has not one, but two, reputations to protect, if not, indeed, enhance. But in the case of James Thurber, this double-indemnity embraces a particular threat to canon.

Thurber was a man who spent much of his grafting life in the pockmarked redoubts of the marital front-line, sending back his withering dispatches from the Million Years War, the Ernie Pyle of the sexual barrage and the nuptial raid. Yet there is not one word among the 80,000 gumbled together here to suggest that he enjoyed anything but snug serenity beneath the monogamous cotterpane. The man that Thurber must have been, if we base our reasonable assumptions upon the writer that he unquestionably was, is simply not here. Did he *never* write privately, to anyone, about lust or love or marriage or extra-marriage, to confide, or complain, or rejoice, or even merely to tell?

The question does not proceed from irrelevant prurience, but from honest literary curiosity: for Thurber's published writings across thirty years take the disordered relationships of men and women (or, as he would put it, men versus women) as a constant theme. And what are a writer's letters for, if not for the elucidation of the printed stuff? Particularly since the humorist's trade is so often the refraction of experience, the fabrication of an alternative reality from material whose raw state he has used his best endeavours to conceal. Does the devoted reader of Thurber not yearn for a detective hour or two spent tip-toeing through *The Unselected Letters*?

Though there would, inevitably, be less there than one would find among the unpublished detritus of other writers. The best collections of letters have always been those which have contained the sort of writing that the author was unable to write elsewhere: for the novelist, the dramatist, the poet, for anyone committed to the relatively exclusive form, there will always be piles of unusable reflections and the words to clothe them lying in the chambers of the brain, best fit for the personal outlet of diaries and letters. These stockpiles are rarely available to the humorous journalist; they have all been pressed into professional and commercial service. His personal life is his public product, suitably distorted by the comic tinkering which is his art: everything, every random, disconnected thought, every idiosyncratic observation, every accident or encounter or half-caught eavesdropping, is instant grist. It may make only a couple of hundred words but, clearly typed and snappily titled, it will do; an editor will help it pay the author's gas bill. No humorist in his right mind would waste it on an uncommissioned letter. Indeed, taking the obverse, essential Thurber, high Thurber, *Thurber* Thurber, *The Night the Bed Fell*, *The Day the Dam Broke*, *The Dog that Bit People*, say — what are they but personal letters from him to you, limning the minutiae of his life, but published by *The New Yorker* simply because that's the way he chose to address the envelope? Indeed, it mightn't be pushing it too far to say that Thurber's letters have already appeared in print, selected by himself.

Certainly, what Helen Thurber and Edward Weeks have gathered together would not, I think, have passed Thurber's obsessively rigorous criteria, nor received Harold Ross's imprimatur. They are dull dogs, almost all, too much concerned with

the sort of day-to-day trivia of interest only to the recipients, the keeping-abreast, the private jokes, the inquiries into mutual friends, the evocation of mutual memories. The writing itself, casual to the point of sloppiness, is utterly uncharacteristic of so self-punishingly meticulous a prose-maker, and the laughs are very few indeed. If these were the first words of Thurber to fall into a browser's hand, I doubt that he would feel an irresistible need to fork out folding money for the dozen or so unique and hilariously brilliant books of Thurber's writing prime. Nor does it seem to me, setting aside the quality of the expression, to be much use as a companion volume: it will, surely, be bought only by those who already have a considerable knowledge and love of Thurber's humour, many of whom will also (at least I hope) have read Burton Bernstein's excellent 1975 biography, and I cannot for the life of me see how their reading of the works or their understanding of the man will be enriched by these disappointing shards of correspondence.

Except where the Eye is concerned. The agony of the eye was something from which Thurber could manufacture scant comedy (although there was one wonderful exception, *The Admiral on the Wheel*, written in the years before the whole terror hit), and thus, commercially unpalatable, it occupies a frequent and prominent position in his letters. The Eye, in fact, hovers over this book like a masonic emblem; at times, the book itself feels like a biography of the Eye.

Not the left eye, dead before our story begins, shot out (or, more accurately, in) during one of those childhood games in which one child pretends to be William Tell Jr. and the other pretends to know what he's doing with a bow and arrow; but the right eye. For forty years, the right eye had to make its way in the world alone; it was a tenacious and a courageous way, but that its long struggle was, quite literally, unequal. In 1900, ophthalmology was a halting and an errant trade: it was some thirty years before the full extent of optic syphilis was scientifically appreciated, and none suffered from the ignorance more than Thurber. The Eye struggled to do the work both of itself and of its absent mate; which doomed it. From the moment that the arrow struck, the writing was on the wall for the bereft Eye, and fading fast. It finally failed in 1947, when its host was fifty-two, leaving him fourteen further years of, now pitch, darkness.

I anthropomorphize this Eye. I give it a separate identity, only because Thurber insists upon doing so himself. He saw it as slightly apart from him, with its own personality; its own destiny, indeed its own health; the Eye's life affected his, but it belonged more to the Eye than it did to him. He observed it from within like a compassionate, concerned and frequently irritated friend, knowing that it would one day let him down and leave him to struggle inadequately, on alone.

In 1939, after six operations, he wrote thus to the eye-surgeon; now his friend, Dr Gordon Bruce, who had during the 1930s belatedly attempted to save Thurber's sight:

The old eye is the same as ever for distance but I'll be goddam if I can read — except — and this is funny — under a big umbrella outdoors in a bright sun; under these conditions, I see to read even newspaper type exactly as well without my glasses as with my distance ones. If I use my right lens as a magnifying glass and pull it away, I can see as clearly for a fifth of a second, as I did in 1896. I can also do a lot of other tricks, but I am getting crosser and snappier and sadder every minute, straining and struggling to type and to read and to draw (the latter is the easiest). I'd rather atrophy those muscles in two years than, by God, go through life like a blindfolded man looking for a black sock on a black carpet. If I use the old distance lenses and

only have stronger ones for reading, wouldn't that even up the atrophy problem? Couldn't I go without glasses when not reading, or something? Life is no good to me at all unless I can read, type, and draw. I would sell out for 13 cents.

Nobody, fortunately, came up with the money. Or if they did, Thurber had by then changed the deal. It had been made during one of his lower lows (there were many), and in fact one cannot resist the guess that, had he tried to kill himself, the likelihood is that his natural ineptitude with inanimate objects would not only have saved him, it would have ended up nourishing his pen. We know, that he never made the attempt because there is no article entitled "The Night the Noose Broke".

There was an alternative method (apart from booze, which went, and

in vast intakes, without saying) of coming to terms with the Eye, of coping with the foul irony whereby the living tool that had enabled him to express his genius now threatened to make that expression impossible: eleven years later than the thirteen-cent offer, and by now three years totally blind, Thurber wrote to his old Columbus friend Joel Sayre:

The maddest I get is at people who avoid discussing my eye on the ridiculous ground that it would embarrass me. There is too much talk about the courage or nobility of the afflicted, since I know damn well that the challenge is far greater than the handicap. Remember that one-legged newsboy in Colapage absorbed in learning new skills and tricks. I saw an armless woman in a movie short wrapping bundles with her feet, and having

more fun than you and I have with our hands. Furthermore, I have been spared the sight of television. We cannot, obviously, evaluate that challenge; all we can do is evaluate the product of the challenged years, and there is no question but that there is more of the good and the true and the unquestionably Thurber in the writing of the last two, dark, decades than in the brighter two that preceded them. That all I have taken away with me from this dislocated clobbering of his letters is the reminder of the hell of his blindness. I should probably find deeply distressing, if that reminder did not also serve to astound me with the magnitude of the tragedy which Thurber overcame in order to produce the dazzling magnitude of his comedy. The example charges up the spirit, and humiliates one's own cheap grievances.

## Courtly diversions

By Douglas Dunn

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD:  
Poems 1911-1940  
189pp. Brunetti Clark Books, 1700  
Long Pine, Bloomfield Hills, Michi-  
gan 48013. \$11.95.  
0 313 642 8897

Other than memories of the poems written by Amory Blaine in *This Side of Paradise* — Eleanor's poem to Amory, or the poems ascribed to other characters in Scott Fitzgerald's first novel — few readers will have much knowledge of Fitzgerald as a poet. Biographers dwell affectionately on his contributions to the musical plays performed by Princeton's Triangle Club; but the impression given by, say, Arthur Mizener in *The Far Side of Paradise* is one merely of approval of a brilliant youth's precocity.

None had such promise then, and none your scapegoat will or your disarming grace; Conceived like Perseus in a dream of gold.

For you were bold as was Danaë's son, Conceived like Perseus in a dream of gold. Thus John Pease Bishop, the original of Thomas D'Invernizzi, Amory Blaine's class-mate whose name appears beneath the dedicatory poem to *The Great Gatsby*. Bishop's lines suggest, rather than for the novelist and story-writer that Fitzgerald became. But that is nothing remarkable: many prose-writers begin as university poets, and their contemporaries have an understandable fondness for those heady years of long, enthusiastic conversations and intimately confessed ambitions.

Towards the end of 1939, Fitzgerald wrote to his daughter:

Sometimes I wish I had gone along with that gang [Cole Porter and Rodgers and Hart], but I guess I am too much of a moralist at heart and really want to preach at people in some acceptable form rather than to entertain them.

The lyrics he wrote for *The Triangle Club's* shows certainly demonstrate a youthful facility with the language of show business. They are spiced with the worldly wit of a bright undergraduate. For example, a song called "Love or Eucalyptus", from the show *Flirt Flirt Flirt* (the original, clearly, of *Hot Hot Hottentot* in *This Side of Paradise*):

My figure dances so flinkly pass No curves so soft and fair, No fashionable butte, but plenty of muscle, And involuntarily to spare.

And, as Amory Blaine would have said, so on and so forth, as a wittily contrasting dialogue unfolds between two girls of opposite types. By the following Christmas, Fitzgerald was writing lyrics for *The Eye* — the book was by Edmund Wilson. One of the songs was called "We Got My Eyes on You". Wasn't there a number with a very similar title by Cole Porter just a few years later? The

show of 1916 contains a song "Dance, Lady, Dance", and that, too, sounds familiar. These Triangle Club Songs are, incidentally, available from the same publisher.

Fitzgerald's literary poems of 1917-1920 are indebted to Swinburne, Dowson, and many others, as James Dickey points out in a Foreword that demands a great deal of Fitzgerald's verse but which is otherwise excellent. Interestingly enough, though, some of them came in handy for *This Side of Paradise*. "Princeton — The Last Day" is printed there as rhyming prose, while "On a Play Twice Seen" is scribbled by Amory on a blank page of his programme when he attends a stock-company revival of a play whose name was faintly familiar. That Amory Blaine is drawn largely from Fitzgerald himself is nothing new; but as both these poems had appeared in 1917 in Princeton's *Nassau Literary Magazine*, he was flaunting his *educational sentimentalism*. For a man of twenty, the ending of "On a Play Twice Seen" seems mature and achieved:

Yawning and wondering an evening through I watch alone — and chattering of course — I did have charms; You wept a bit, and I grew sad for you. Right there, where Mr X defends divorce

And What's-Her-Name falls fainting in his arms.

As intimate *vers de société*, the poem is charming and, if not profound, satisfying and even memorable.

Yet by 1919, as he was writing *This Side of Paradise*, Fitzgerald was probably aware that he was unlikely to become a poet:

"I'll never be a poet", said Amory as he finished. "I'm not enough of a sensualist really; there are only a few obvious things that I notice as primarily beautiful: women, spring evenings, music at night, the sea; I don't catch the subtle things like silver-snoring trumpets. I may turn out an intellectual, but I'll

never write anything but mediocre poetry."

It is quite possible that as Fitzgerald wrote his first novel he realized that the modernity of his prose did not have its counterpart in his poetry.

In 1935, he published two poems in *The New Yorker*. The first, "Lamp in the Window" — addressed to Zelda — expresses a very Fitzgeraldian attitude: deep feelings, but somehow sardonically observed. The second, "Obit on Parnassus", is more like the bold undergraduate of his Princeton days, the satirist and versifier whose neatness of technique belied his years:

Death before 40's no bar. Lol These had accomplished their feats: Chatterton, Burns and Kit Marlowe, Byron and Shelley and Keats.

And so on, through each decade span, with the certainty of the kind of man of letters which, in the popular misprision, Fitzgerald was not.

Even so, one can hardly avoid the impression that while Fitzgerald possessed a deep and expert appreciation of poetry, its practice was, for him, an incidental and perhaps sentimental pastime. In just over twenty years of professional literary life; he published four novels, almost finished a fifth, published four books of stories and one play, as well as many, many more stories in magazines. No collection of poems was ever contemplated (as far as I know); and the implications are that was was Fitzgerald's sometimes high-spirited, sometimes melancholy diversion: notebook stuff, lines to include with letters or to address to friends, or to lovers like Shellah Graham. "To a Beloved Infidel", for instance, is the verse of a civilized, worldly man, the sort of thing at which courtiers were once expected to be adept.

That sudden smile across a room Was certainly not learned from me. That first faint quiver of the bloom. The eye's initial ecstasy.

Whoever taught you how to page Your loves so sweetly — now as then I thank him for my heritage That glance made bright by other men.

## Houses full of gentlemen

By Sara Pearl

ANN JENNALL COOK:  
The Privileged Playgoers of  
Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642  
316pp. Princeton University Press.  
£13.40.  
0 691 06454 7

This book takes a fresh look at the kind of people who went to the theatre in the early seventeenth century. Ann Jennall Cook believes that they were not chiefly either the middle classes or the gentry-breeding labourers, but came from the ranks of what she calls the "privileged". This deliberately loose term, which avoids such controversial or restrictive labels as "upper class" or "gentry" extends upwards from scholars, clerics, lawyers and newly rich yeomen to the aristocracy. Only these people had enough education, leisure and money to patronize the theatre regularly.

The author begins by charting in great detail the enormous increase during the period of this social group and in particular its presence in London. As the centre of legal, commercial and political affairs, the capital attracted large numbers of wealthy provincials who were eager for entertainment. She presents a detailed picture of London, with its expanding luxury goods, fashion and entertainment industries, as a playground for the idle rich. Idleness, indeed, was the mark of a gentleman; as Viscount Conway satirically noted, "he eat and drink and rise up to a play; and this is to live like a gentleman; for what is a gentleman but his pleasure?" By estimating the huge number of these pleasure-seekers in London, Ms Cook demonstrates that only five to ten per cent of this group need to have been regular theatre-goers to constitute over half of the total London audiences. But while this is a useful reminder of the size of the capital's wealthy population, and an indication of a potential audience, it hardly constitutes evidence that the privileged flocked to the public theatres. That they attended the more expensive private

theatres has never been under question. In a similar fashion, she argues that since plays figured prominently in a gentleman's experience (he would see them at school, university, the Inns of Court, and perhaps also at the houses of the aristocracy and at court), this must have instilled in him an insatiable desire for plays of any kind. But surely such a diet of private and select performances might equally well make gentlemen less inclined to attend the larger public theatres.

Ms Cook's use of documentary evidence is more convincing than her general historical speculations. She shows that gentlemen went in large numbers to the theatre before the establishment of the more exclusive boys' companies, and that privileged patrons continued going to the public playhouses when the adult troupes moved indoors. Visiting dignitaries recording their time in London frequently mention trips to public theatres, and among the wealthy Londoners who we know went to the Globe are John Chamberlain, Sir Humphrey Midway and the Duke of Buckingham. Moreover, the same plays were often presented at both private and public theatres, suggesting the shared tastes of the audiences.

Most interesting of all, Ms Cook shows that the Fortune and the Red Bull companies, generally thought of as providing rowdy and low-class entertainment, also attracted the privileged. The Red Bull company presented plays at court in the 1630s, and when Busino, the Venetian ambassador, went to the Fortune in 1617, he noted that "the best treat was to see such a crowd of nobility so very well arrayed that they looked like so many princes listening as silently and soberly as possible". The author also shows that large numbers of public theatre patrons were prepared to pay high prices for seats. There were twice as many expensive places in the gallery as cheap ones in the pit, and as she says, "Penny patrons alone could not have made Henslowe or the Burdages rich". Theatrical entrepreneurs had shared specifically in the profits from the galleries and might make as much as £10-12 a week, as Oliver Woodliffe

did in 1602-3 with his share in the gallery at the Swan's Head.

In the last chapter of the book the author turns from the "privileged" theatre-goers to the "plebeian" ones, arguing that these were a very small minority. Except for eminent merchants and some errant apprentices, she believes that London's citizens could not have afforded the time or the money to go to the theatre. Here she is on shakier ground. Recent historical research has shown that the number of men who owned and ran small family businesses was very high in London. Neither the time nor the cost would have kept such people away. Moreover, the figures which she gives to prove that journeymen and servants would have found the theatre too expensive are open to question. It is true that this was a period of steep inflation and fixed

wages, and that food costs absorbed a relatively high proportion of the family budget. But the price of a ticket then was cheap compared with today. A penny entrance fee represented only 1/72 of a journeyman's average weekly wage of six shillings. Today, a cinema ticket of 22 pence represents 1/30 of a weekly wage of £60. Even when the price of admission doubled at the end of the period, the proportion of the wage that this represents is hardly prohibitive.

Ms Cook is also unduly sceptical about the contemporary references to "plebeian" playgoers. She points out that playwrights like "Penny Stinkards" and the "Grease-spoon Audience" attending rival theatres were designed mainly as a ploy to bolster their own patrons' sense of superiority, but such comments must have had a basis in fact to have had

## Coming to maturity

By John Stachniewski

MARJORIE GARBER:  
Coming of Age in Shakespeare  
248pp. Methuen. £12.50.  
0 416 30350 1

Marjorie Garber's title, adapted from Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*, indicates her anthropological approach to Shakespeare. This involves regarding the plays both as — in themselves — a maturation rites at which audiences assist, and as embodiments of multifarious rites of passage to maturity. Such rites are tripartite, to represent phases of separation, transition and incorporation (in, for instance, the process of marrying). Shakespeare's characters are tested at critical junctures (or "thresholds") of their fictional lives, recognized as — in primitive societies by ritual observances, and their performance under trial measures their progress towards mature adulthood.

Applied to individual characters with regard to their peculiar circumstances in the scarcely primitive

society of Shakespeare's plays, these rites of passage turn out to be handily capacious categories. They include marriage (complicated by filial and peer-group ties), naming and induction into roles (with the associated questions of identity and achievement), and death (others' as well as their own). Added to these are maturation rites in an unexplained extended sense. These cover pretty well any phase of life you can think of, whether or not accompanied by ritual: loss of innocence (or individuation), sexual awareness, acquisition of communicative language, establishment of secure identity by comparison and contrast with peers and parent-figures, defecation, pregnancy, parenthood, and so on.

Had the book stuck to ritual events, with which, from greetings to funerals, the plays are packed, its method would have seemed more even and disciplined. As it is, after a tumble of references to anthropologists and psychoanalysts, the chapters deliver banalities. ("Shakespeare's women are frequently outpoken about their sexual feelings") and lazy critical romances pressed into the service of a elusive theme. On *Measure for Measure* Marjorie Gar-

ber writes: "The Duke has been caused by cruelty . . . But in fact Isabella is being tested . . . Claudio's 'death' becomes the instrument of Isabella's conversion from justice to mercy . . ." First, Garber presents as a novelty what few deny — that Isabella is subjected to an educative process. Second, she fails to see that viewing the Duke as cruel (or unwarrantably manipulative) is not incompatible with this perception. Third, Isabella is not converted "from justice to mercy" (Garber's phrase is a bit typical grammatical laxity): in Act 2 Isabella speaks for mercy ("Why, all souls that were forfeit once . . .") as movingly as Portia and there is no evidence that she abandons belief in its primacy.

An anthropological approach could train the eye on ceremonial moments in the plays (such as the donning and doffing of veils as symbolic deaths and rebirths) which implicitly comment on one another and characters concerned. But this happens too rarely in Professor Garber's book. And her confident belief that "the plays offer us a cumulative portrait of what 'it' means to be a successful adult" is desolatingly impertinent to Shakespeare.

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# Making friends with the fossils

By J. S. Weiner

RICHARD LEAKEY:

*The Making of Mankind*  
256pp. Michael Joseph. £9.95.  
0 7181 1931 2

DONALD C. JOHANSON and  
MAITLAND A. EDEY:

*Lucy*  
The Beginnings of Humankind  
409pp. Granada. £9.95.  
0 246 11362 6

*The Emergence of Man*  
A Joint Symposium of the Royal  
Society and the British Academy  
held on March 12 and 13 1980  
216pp. The Royal Society and British  
Academy. £21.  
0 85443 158 8

Palaeoanthropology – the study of man's origins and evolution – is a two-faced affair; a profession with two kinds of practitioner. There are those who proclaim the story of man's evolution as a kaleidoscope of sensational and fabulous discoveries; this is for popular consumption. There are those who toil in the obscurity of the laboratory or at the computer terminal engaged in unromantic, tedious analyses and close interpretation. In its dual nature palaeoanthropology is by no means unique – astronomers, physicists, psychologists, historians all play the roles of both popular entertainers and cluttered academics. But palaeoanthropology is peculiar in that popularization has become highly organized and academically acceptable, indeed institutionalized, particularly in the US. The reasons for this I shall come to in a moment.

The peculiar state of the subject is well illustrated by the three books

under review. Let us first remind ourselves that Charles Darwin's two great works were entitled *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, and both were of course entirely about evolution. There is nothing about Darwin's family (illustrious as it was) or his strivings, exploits, adventures, his excitement or his transports. Now Richard Leakey's book is entitled *The Making of Mankind*, an echo of Darwin's *Descent of Man*. But what gets pride of place here is the story of the Leakey family, its trials and triumphs and what Richard calls the "Leakey tradition". It is through the doings of the Leakey family that we are told the story of the hominids. The narrative is graphic and breathless, discoveries are "amazing", "incredible", "absolutely fascinating". All is warm and friendly as we get to know the exploits of David, Don, Mary, Kathy, Ellen and other friends and rivals, and how they feel about "Nutcracker Man", "Dear Boy", "Mrs Pies" and their fossil families. All in all, Mr Leakey has written a vivid and arresting account which takes us through the palaeolithic epochs into the world of present-day hunter-gatherers, simple agriculturalists and many other anthropologically interesting peoples.

Then there is the book about the glamorous "Lucy", whose highly distinctive family name, *Australopithecus afarensis*, given to her by her discoverer, D. C. Johanson, is rejected by most serious palaeontologists. Johanson's and Edey's book is also directed at the story of human evolution, but here the personalization and excitement is pitched at an even more feverish and hectic note. Dr Johanson just cannot get over his stunning luck in finding Lucy's bones (not all of them unfortunately). We are told a lot about Lucy and of the doings of her guardian. This book

does not sustain the narrative as readably and coherently as does Leakey's. It is marred by a number of errors, many engendered by the authors' fondness for anecdote and reconstructed dialogue. The story here given, that it was Marston who urged the application of the fluorine dating method to the Pildown remains, was indignantly repudiated by the late Kenneth Oakley. The general reader need not take too seriously the rather convoluted and often confusing arguments about the relationships of the many apparently different Australopithecine and Hominine fossils. But he will not fail to be impressed by the wealth of material now available bearing on the evolution of our species.

Every major discovery, over the past hundred years, of man's fossil forebears has been marked by controversy and publicity. But for a long time this was quite sporadic, recurring with every new claim and then subsiding and left to be fought over by the professionals. But, over the past ten or fifteen years, there has emerged an almost permanent audience inside and outside the universities avid for a continuous diet of new and hotly contested facts. The presentation of the latest discoveries has been put on a well-organized PR basis. A troupe of field workers – fossil searchers, ape and monkey watchers, famulars of primitive hunter-gatherers – command large and enthusiastic audiences on the US lecture circuits. There are also TV presentations, dramatic museum displays and so on. The books by Leakey and Johanson convey very well the fascination exerted by this kind of promotion of palaeoanthropology.

How has all this come about? There is no real mystery here. Louis Leakey was a visionary who saw the

enormous potential for major fossil discovery in Africa. To realize his vision he needed all the financial (and political) support he could muster – from foundations, universities, private and public benefactors. So he wore himself out lecturing to gathering large and small, covering great distances from his Nairobi home throughout the US and Western Europe. At his death he had succeeded in establishing Nairobi as the world base for anthropological and archaeological discovery, and a major centre for the storage, cleaning, reconstruction and study of fossils and artefacts. And Richard Leakey has consolidated his father's work. But the intense pressure for support remains. And so the maintenance of large popular audiences is needed and they help greatly to keep the field-work going.

But of course this popular palaeoanthropology is parasitic on, and badly overshadows, the real discipline of modern, sophisticated palaeoanthropology. Because of the peculiar popularization of the subject I believe the "respectable" scientific community does not fully appreciate the extent to which modern palaeoanthropology is really a science of high technology. With its complex techniques of chemical, immunological and physical dating, of highly advanced statistical, not to mention cladistic evaluation, of geochronology and geo-ecology, it is as rigorous and demanding a science as any.

Even the non-specialist will appreciate this (to some extent) if he looks into *The Emergence of Man* – a well-produced report of a symposium jointly organized recently by the Royal Society and the British Academy. Here we can see what is really entailed in the unravelling of the evolutionary history of mankind. There is the major question of the

degree of genetic affinity between present-day men, apes and monkeys. What can be learnt from the DNA-coded sequences of modern primates – how far and how fast they diverge, and do these genetic "distances" in the fossil record? And how, and with what precision, are the dates which go back to 10 million years and more (and which are scattered throughout Leakey's and Johanson's books) arrived at? There is a splendid article on this subject by G. H. Curtis. For a judicious review of the status of the many, all too fragmentary fossil remains of the prehistoric era we have an authoritative analysis by Elwyn Simons. Philip Tobias does a first-rate job going carefully and coolly through the labyrinth of claims and counter-claims (such as we read about in *Lucy*) and making what seems to me the best synthesis of the available evidence. What it means to study the dentition and dietary habits from examination of fossil teeth is impressively displayed in the papers by B. A. Wood and A. Walker respectively.

And yet even in this company of experts the eccentric and speculative has crept in. R. H. Tuttle continues to give credence to Sir Alister Hardy's hypothesis of man's aquatic phase of evolution, a notion for which after twenty years no hard evidence has yet appeared.

This fine volume also brings together a number of thoughtful contributions on an evolutionary approach to the neuro-psychology of human communication and behaviour. The whole endeavour is clearly and succinctly put into perspective, as one would expect, by J. Z. Young's introduction and his summing up – a perspective of not only the reminiscences of pre- and proto-humans, but also the work of academic history – have a nostalgic ring, a tendency to point out that the colonial empires in their day performed useful functions, now performed by no one.

# Imperial beginnings

By J. H. Parry

G. V. SCAMMELL:

*The World Encompassed*  
The first European maritime empires  
c.800-1650

538pp. Methuen. £14.95.  
0 416 76280 8

Books about empires have proliferated in the past twenty-five years, as was to be expected in a generation that saw the break-up or abandonment of all the remaining empires administered from centres in western Europe. Decline and fall are always interesting. Interest was further quickened by the rhetoric of local independence movements, and by the grave approval of those who saw national determination pursuing its destined path in "developing" parts of the world. When independence proved, after a few years, to be a disillusioning experience – as it did in some places – there was a further motive for writing books about empires: to show that the failures and shortcomings of newly independent states could be laid at the door of former imperial rulers, who had so cowed and exploited dependent peoples as to unfit them to govern themselves; or else to suggest that "colonialism" in altered forms had managed to survive the demise of empires, so continuing the process of exploitation. The study of this kind of argument, for many people, was to turn the derivative words "colonialism", "imperialism", and so on, into indiscriminate terms of abuse having no precise connection with empires; and to produce a reaction. Some recent books about empires – not only the reminiscences of pre- and proto-humans, but also the work of academic history – have a nostalgic ring, a tendency to point out that the colonial empires in their day performed useful functions, now performed by no one.

The contemporary world society may or may not be better off without the European colonial empires; but it is inescapably a society which they helped in large measure to create. For many years a large part of the earth's inhabited surface was administered from centres in Europe. Small bodies of Europeans were responsible for the government, the economic welfare and development, the political behaviour, of hundreds of millions of people in dependent territories all round the world, and historians naturally wish to inquire how, why, and when this state of affairs came about. The story of the origin and growth of empires, no less than that of their break-up and disappearance, deserves attention both for its intrinsic interest and as a key to the understanding of the world of today; and in fact books about their rise, though fewer than books about their fall, have appeared in increasing numbers in recent years. *The World Encompassed* is one of the best.

Most accounts of the European empires begin their story in the fifteenth century, conventionally with the expeditions which Prince Henry of Portugal sent to explore West Africa and to settle some of the Atlantic islands. G. V. Scammell takes a much longer span of time. He starts with Norse expansion in the ninth century, and deals with four empires in four separate chapters – the Norse, the Hanse, the Venetian Republic, the Genoese Republic – before Portugal is even mentioned. This is a sensible and logical arrangement; of the four, three exercised powerful influences on the empires, so continuing the process of exploitation. The study of this kind of argument, for many people, was to turn the derivative words "colonialism", "imperialism", and so on, into indiscriminate terms of abuse having no precise connection with empires; and to produce a reaction. Some recent books about empires – not only the reminiscences of pre- and proto-humans, but also the work of academic history – have a nostalgic ring, a tendency to point out that the colonial empires in their day performed useful functions, now performed by no one.

# Careering through the Caribbean

By A. N. Ryan

MARY FREAR KEELER (Editor):  
*Sir Francis Drake's West Indian Voyage 1585-86*

358pp. Hakluyt Society. £12.  
0 904 180 01 8

The main events of Francis Drake's sweep through the Caribbean in 1585-86, an enterprise which helped to convince Philip II of Spain that the English problem would have to be resolved by force, did not remain secret for long. They were made public in 1588-89 in various printings of *A Summarie and True Discourse of Sir Francis Drake's West Indian Voyage*, edited by Thomas Cates, who attributed the authorship to Walter Bigges, a captain in the land forces, and claimed that, after Bigges's death at Cartagena, the text was completed by Lieutenant Croftes, of whom nothing more is known. Mary Frear Keeler has included in her collection of contemporary material, published and unpublished, a critical edition of the text printed by Richard Field in 1589. She guides us skilfully through the variants, bringing out interesting differences, many of them propagandist insertions, between the published version and the manuscript source or sources on which it was based. Despite its avowedly propagandist aims, for the encouragement of maritime activity, the *Summarie* is a work of considerable historical judgment.

The study of more recent maritime expeditions is often facilitated by the general survival of ships' logs and journals. For that of 1585-86 only three have survived in anything like substantial form, the most complete being that of the armed merchant-ship *Primrose*, listed as "vice admiral" and commanded by Martin Frobiisher. The *Primrose* journal, a valuable source of information, was first printed by Corbett in modern English. Dr Keeler's edition, which retains the original usage and spelling, testifies to the accuracy of Corbett's transcription. The journal of the *Tiger*, most probably a London-owned ship, has never before been printed. Incomplete though it is, we are fortunate to have it, for the *Tiger* was commanded by Christopher Carleill, "lieutenant general" of the land forces, who was steeped in Spanish, Walsingham, one of the chief sponsors within court circles of the voyage. Among many features of interest, the *Tiger* journal affords us glimpses of Drake in council at the outset of the voyage. "I cannot say that ever," records Carleill, "I had to deal with a man of greater reason or more careful circumspection."

This was neither the first nor last instance of an uneasy relationship between Drake, a man of comparatively humble social origins, and Elizabethan "gentleman adventurers" who flocked to sea. It is, however, important to note that, despite the hostility of Knollys and the adventurers clustered around him, by no means all the "gentlemen" were lined up against Drake. Drake himself, perhaps recalling the crisis of authority in the Doughty affair of the voyage of 1577-80, suspected, as he was prone to do, political intrigue against the enterprise, allegedly saying that "they [Knollys and his followers] were pack brought a piousness, wishing he had never seen them". He may have had reasons for distrusting Knollys from the beginning, for there is no mention in the *Tiger* journal of his having invited him to attend confidential discussions with Carleill and Frobiisher.

Dr Keeler's thorough documentation and learned commentary increase our knowledge and understanding of the great West Indies raid. Besides confirming, with some additions and modifications, what we already know of its course, the impact of sickness and its limited success; she underlines the social and disciplinary tensions which accompanied the Elizabethan sea forces wherever they went. This volume is an admirable addition to the immense contribution of the Hakluyt Society over the years to the study of Elizabethan maritime endeavour.

The new address of the Hakluyt Society is c/o Map Library, British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG.

# The artefactual aggregate

By J. J. Wymer

DEREK A. ROE:

*The Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Periods in Britain*  
324pp. 38 plates. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £35.  
0 7100 0600 4

When Derek Roe compiled his gazetteer of Lower and Middle Palaeolithic sites in Britain, which was published in 1968 by the Council for British Archaeology, this was the first time since 1897 that the overall distribution of the stone material available for study could be assessed. It was a laborious compilation, but it made no attempt to go beyond tabulated lists. There was no discussion of the context of the material, no comments on datings or associations, nothing beyond a basic typological classification related to museum collections and provenances. Now, in this new volume, we have an explanation of how this great wealth of artefactual evidence might be interpreted.

General reviews of the British Palaeolithic period have been published in the past decade by Paul Mellars, Alex. Morrison and myself. None has the archaeological detail contained in this book, which is more than a review; it is an assessment by a man who has handled virtually all the Palaeolithic artefacts found in Britain, has measured thousands of them and knows the relevant literature. To my knowledge, Dr Roe has never dug in the field, but he has followed Sir Mortimer Wheeler's advice and excavated in museum cellars. The emphasis of his book is thus on the artefacts themselves: hand-axes, flakes, and other tools. Geological evidence, placed within a time-range of perhaps half a million years, and the gist of the book is a compelling, technical argument as to how they may fit into it.

At Roe's admission, at the beginning, it would be very difficult if the material could be described in a

neat, chronological order, but anyone familiar with the British Pleistocene knows that it is difficult to make any statement or conclusion without scientific qualification. "Facts", in a scientific sense, are frustratingly elusive, doubtful and unrepeatable. It is not surprising that colleagues in some of the natural sciences, to whom archaeologists look for light, regard the work of typologists with scepticism or despair. Nor is it surprising that the so-called "New Archaeology" demands a much more critical, quantitative approach. Roe is better placed than anyone for resolving the discord between the results of past archaeological intuition and the harsher analyses of modern methods, for it was he who first applied a metrical system for axes, demonstrating several distinctive groups (seven by precise, well-subgroups, based on thirty-eight assemblages). Some of us may have felt we knew this already, but it was looking at the assemblages, but it was a prudent innovation, for too much in Palaeolithic archaeology has been based in the past on subjective assessments.

The first chapter in Roe's archaeological argument, following two necessary background chapters, is entitled "The search for a basic lower Palaeolithic sequence", meaning one which can be demonstrated in all British sites. This I also would regard as a first priority, although I have heard other archaeologists dismiss it as less than a secondary or environmental or cultural matters. However, unless a site can be put into its correct time-sequence, "cultural" or environmental matters have little human relevance. Roe uses the classic Swanscombe – Northfleet area in order to obtain this basic sequence. He is quite aware of its deficiencies (very little material in the primary context, no satisfactory pollen profiles, biases of unknown duration) but, in the absence of anything better, it is acceptable. In my opinion, no satisfactory basic sequence will be available until some means can be devised of obtaining absolute chronometric dates for both the sediments and the objects they

contain. Amino-acid analysis, thermoluminescence or radioactive methods may eventually give us this, or we may be able to settle for a series of reliable relative dates. In the meantime, the Swanscombe – Northfleet sequence must do.

Roe is to be congratulated on the clarity with which he expounds his theme. This book reads so easily that I am sure he must have re-written it many times. He is never dogmatic or jargon. For such a complex subject he has managed to retain a surprising amount of narrative. This is an ideal volume, indeed, from which to learn how Palaeolithic studies have progressed and where they now stand. It is the summing up of a subject as it enters a new era of development, for gone are the days of lone flint collectors and archaeologists pronouncing their opinions as though they were sacred and beyond criticism, let alone reasoned scrutiny. It will help all those currently engaged on reconstructing the past to understand the problems confronting Palaeolithic archaeologists, and will also serve as a useful reference book. Some material is published here for the first time, there is a good list of carefully selected references and a suitable index.

Specialists will have many queries. For example, I have no doubts about the Sidestrand hand-axe except for its provenance: South-east or Levalloisian? I see no reason for querying the Clactonian status of the Barnham industry and I have excavated material there that is in primary context; I prefer Kukla's assessment of the correlation between the two marine and terrestrial climatic episodes and would equate the Hoxnian with Stage 11, not 7. I thought the Acheulean at High Lodge was in primary context within a fluvial channel, not in solution-deposited material with the artefacts preserved at Ipswich Museum; the relative age of the Boy's Hill and Lyndly Hill, faces of the Thames are very uncertain; why is Gollin's work on Vauxley excluded?

Of greater account than these and many other cavils, however, is that at last we have a good account of the Wolvercote hand-axes; the masterly drawings made by the late C. O. Watershouse have been extracted from the drawer in the Pitt Rivers Museum where they have lain so long. Similarly, for the first time we have details and drawings of the Kent's Cavern hand-axes. There is a very useful survey of the distinctive Mousterian flat-butted cordate hand-axes, which the author insists on

# Natural causes

By Norman Hammond

IAN SIMMONS and MICHAEL TOOLEY (Editors):

*The Environment in British Prehistory*  
324pp. Duckworth. £24 (paperback, £7.95).

This collective volume is intended as a companion to Colin Renfrew's similar compendium *British Prehistory*, issued by Duckworth in 1974 (and reviewed in the *TLS* on March 14, 1975). It has the same jacket design, preface and chapter divisions, so that the palaeolithic, mesolithic, neolithic, bronze and iron ages continue in their anachronistic utility. The period chapters are preceded by an outline by Michael Tooley of the methods used in palaeoenvironmental reconstruction, and succeeded by a code on "Culture and Environment" by Ian Simmons, and by an excellent, full bibliography. It is a book covering more or less the same ground as John G. Evans's *The Environment of Early Man in the British Isles* (1975), but with perhaps rather fuller coverage of the later periods, and with the benefit of much recent work by the authors and others to draw on.

Although the archaeological material is subordinated to the ecological, as one might expect, enough is brought in to give a good idea of

calling *bout coupé* hand-axes although the term is not used in France. Virtually all sites of consequence are dealt with in a sensible, balanced manner. Inevitably, since the book has been written, new discoveries have been made or published. There were some artificial structures at Hoxne; there is now a large collection from Pontnewydd Cave and a human tooth; and High Lodge, although still unpublished, appears to be of a much earlier date than suspected.

cultural development. Radiocarbon dates and pollen diagrams are extensively used to frame the arguments, and the faunal evidence is most intelligently deployed. The book is less of a complement to *British Prehistory* than a replacement of it, better than the ideal companion to Simmons and Tooley's volume today is surely J. V. S. Megaw and D. D. A. Simpson's *Introduction to British Prehistory* (Leicester University Press, 1979).

*Papers of the British School at Rome*, Volume XLVIII (1920) (208pp plus 34 plates. £12. British School at Rome at 1 Lower Gardens, Exhibition Road, London SW7 2A.) has recently been published. The volume, as the editor T. P. Wiseman indicates in a preface, is dedicated in part to the memory of John Ward-Perkins, who as Director of the School from 1946 to 1974 contributed decisively to its re-emergence as an active and valued institution. Ward-Perkins himself contributes a paper on "Nicomedia and the Marble Trade" to the present collection, as well as an appreciation (together with F. Zevi and R. B. Rutherford) from S. Connolly, Richard Hodges, Graeme Barker and Keith Wade on "Excavations at D85 (Santa Maria in Civita). An Early Medieval Hilltop Settlement in Molise" and C. N. Houseley on "The Franco-Papal Trade Negotiations of 1322-3".

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## commentary

## Ark on the road

By Peter Keating

Beasts on Wheels  
Scottish Arts Council Travelling  
Gallery

When Jeremiah Wombwell, the founding-father of travelling menageries, died in 1850, *The Times* praised him for his work in "forwarding practically the study of natural history among the masses". It seems unlikely that Wombwell's lions and tigers, elephants and rhinos, had precisely that effect on many spectators: the serious student of natural history in the early nineteenth century would have turned to the permanent menageries and "zoological gardens" then being established in response to public interest.

Wombwell's role was inspirational, to excite wonder and amazement as he took his animals on the road to places where people would willingly pay to see, often for the first time, such exotic beasts as the "Unicorn of Scripture", "Cameleopard", and "Polar Monster".

It is particularly fitting that the Scottish Arts Council's celebration of nineteenth-century menageries should take the form of an exhibition in the Travelling Gallery, an imaginatively converted double-decker bus that will be touring the Strathclyde region until the end of February. Nowadays the animals are familiar: it is the concept of an art gallery that is popularizing, and "Beasts on Wheels" serves several functions simultaneously. It offers some fine examples of Victorian popular art in an unconventional setting while still managing to evoke the atmosphere of a small traditional gallery, and it carries itself - like the menagerie it portrays - to its potential customers. For most of January "Beasts on Wheels" is visiting Glasgow; in February, it moves on to Renfrew

and Dumbarton, making day or half-day stops at factories, shopping precincts, schools, community centres and hospitals (a detailed itinerary is available from Elizabeth Macgregor, Travelling Gallery, Scottish Arts Council, 19 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh EH2 4DF.)

The restricted space of the Travelling Gallery means that only a fraction of the pictorial art inspired by Victorian menageries can be displayed, but even so room has been found for garish posters, line engravings, some delicate lithographs and a good deal of miscellaneous information. There is also a romantic water-colour by J. Atkinson of the Bostock and Wombwell caravans on the road, pulled by the huge, gentle drayhorses that were, ironically, the most crucial animals in the whole exercise.

Dry-horses were utilitarian and mundane: it was sensation that the Victorian public demanded and Wombwell provided. The entrance fee was one shilling for adults, sixpence for children, with the "labouring classes" allowed in at half-price after 6 p.m. For their money they were promised a sight of "the grandest collection of WILD FLESH EATING ANIMALS ever seen in this or any other country". Special attractions were sought after and highly paid. Wombwell boasted proudly on his posters that he was paying for Madame Salva, "the unrivalled African Lion Hunter", £40 per week to parade her "Forest-bred African Lions and Lionesses, blood-thirsty Bengal Tigers, ravenous Wolves and Russian Hybrids".

The occasional disaster confirmed that the animals really were wild and no doubt did little harm to the takings. In 1857 Ellen Bright, the "Lion Queen", was mauled to death during her act, and for a while women were banned from such dangerous activities. A less tragic ending resulted from one of Wombwell's publicity stunts. In 1825 he promoted a fight



An advertisement for Wombwell's Royal Menagerie, which took to the road in the early nineteenth century under the patronage of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and the Royal Family. The poster is on loan from the Bodleian Library to the exhibition reviewed here.

between six bull-mastiff dogs and a tame lion called Nero. When Nero appeared to be in trouble, a wilder lion called Wallace was let loose on the dogs. This stage-managed event was recorded in a romanticized broadside ballad "Meekness and Magnanimity", which is on show in the exhibition. In this the original inspiration behind that other "ferocious and wild" lion called Wallace who swallowed little Albert Ramsbottom?

There is also a coloured engraving of an "infuriated elephant" being shot by soldiers that raises another possible literary source - the Wombwell elephant in *The Old Wives Tale* whose execution causes so much ex-

citement in Bursley. Arnold Bennett's elephant submits tamely to his fate: the menagerie elephant struggles to get out of his wooden cage and at the soldiers.

"Beasts on Wheels" does not concentrate exclusively on Wombwell, but inevitably he dominates the exhibition. After his death the business was divided among various relatives, notably E. H. Bostock who tried, successfully for a while, to continue the tradition. But the travelling menagerie was already becoming too expensive to run and, perhaps, the number of new sensations it could offer was falling. The kind of competition it now had to face is con-

veyed by a splendid souvenir programme of a performance by Barnum's circus of "The Destruction of Rome", featuring "bewitching dances", "triumphal processions", and "gorgeous scenes of imperial orgies". Clearly the "Unicorns of Scripture" and "Cameleopards" had had their day.

Well, not quite. The pamphlet accompanying the "Beasts on Wheels" exhibition adds a sad footnote. In 1909 when Bostock was forced to give up the business, many of his animals went to Scottish museums and art galleries where they can still be seen - looking ferocious, but stuffed.

## The Society of Indexes

The year 1982 marks the Silver Jubilee of the Society of Indexers. It was only a few years ago that one publisher referred to "those on the dusty fringes of the academic world who compile indexes and bibliographies", but there is nothing dusty about the Society today. It was formed in March 1957 when G. Norman Knight wrote a letter to *The Times* inviting other indexers to get in touch with him, with this purpose in mind. His first wish was to provide a link between people doing similar work and to remove the intense feeling of solitude which the free-lance indexer experienced while working alone.

The Society has now grown to become the professional association for English-speaking indexers outside Australia, Canada and the United States - which have their own societies affiliated to the original British one. It exists to promote the establishment and maintenance of internationally-recognized standards of indexing; to monitor the training of new indexers; to provide for liaison and exchange of information between all concerned with indexing and indexing technology; and to ensure on qualifications and remuneration of indexers. A Register of approved and available indexers is maintained for the use of publishers, authors and information-retrieval centres.

In the winter months an evening programme of meetings, each with a speaker or theme, is arranged. Conferences are held at about three-yearly intervals in all parts of the country. Contact with members is maintained by the mailing of regular Newsletters and by the journal of the Society, *The Indexer*, which is published twice-yearly and has a worldwide subscription list.

The original number of sixty members who met in 1957 has increased tenfold in the intervening years, with a growing overseas membership list, and the Society has done much to improve the standards of indexing and the status of indexers during that time. It remains an increasingly active body, fully aware that there is still much to be done in the years ahead in the light of modern developments in word processing and computer technology, with which, in this Year of Information Technology, it is bound to become increasingly involved.

Hilda Pearson

## FEI XIAOTONG &amp; Sociology in Revolutionary China

by R. DAWIDKUSH

Fei Xiaotong, one of China's leading social scientists, trained in London under Malinowski and achieved eminence in the 1930s and 40s for his pioneering studies of Chinese peasant life, and for his popular articles which stirred a wide audience in China to an awareness of social and political problems. A non-Marxist who came to sympathize with the Communists, Fei was gradually constrained in his activities after the Revolution until, in the 1950s, a massive propaganda campaign vilified him as a bourgeois rightist intellectual. Almost 20 years of silence and disgrace followed. Following the death of Mao, Fei suddenly reemerged as a leader in the effort to revitalize the social sciences in China; recently he served as one of the judges in the trial of the Gang of Four. Harvard East Asian Monograph, published January, £10.50.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
126 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SD

## Contretemps at Imber

By Patricia Craig

The Bell  
BBC TV

"Dora Greenfield left her husband because she was afraid of him. She decided six months later to return to him for the same reason." So Iris Murdoch tells us in the opening sentences of her fourth novel *The Bell* (1958), now adapted for television by Reg Gadeny, with proper attention to the atmosphere (strange and strained) and the nuances of feeling (devious) to be found in the original. The new opening, though, is conspicuously less succinct and subtle than Iris Murdoch's; someone has actually decided to top the novel's symbolism with a topless nun (a guest at a party in fancy dress who performs a striptease), a figure meant, presumably, to travesty the life-saving nun who appears later. A party is shown in progress - a rather hectic affair, which indicates something about Dora's present mode of life; the fact that she picks this moment, when she can't be heard above the noise of the band, to announce her intention of returning to her husband, indicates something about Dora, an engaging bungling quality that may be equated with spontaneity and lack of calculation. These, and other details of the television prologue, do not distort the novelist's purpose but simply underline it rather too heavily. Once Dora is on the train bound for Imber, however, the dramatization acquires a more satisfactory style (helped by dialogue supplied directly by Iris Murdoch).

Imber Court, to which naughty Dora has been summoned by her art historian husband Paul Greenfield, is the headquarters of an Anglican lay community which seems exactly constituted to confirm the outsider's suspicions about such quasi-religious fraternities, consisting as it does of a group of wretchedly ill-adjusted individuals engaged in creating an impression of tranquillity. The Countess regards itself as an adjunct to the nearby Abbey, which houses an enclosed order of nuns; the Abbey contains the fourteenth-century manuscripts that have brought Paul an embodiment of marital severity - an embodiment of a kind of severity to Imber. Actually, Paul is beset in the novel than he is in the serial (the opening episode anyway: he deteriorates later), where he appears no worse than moderately peeved and aggrieved by Dora's "escape-pade"; his bookish precision of speech has gained a fairly humorous undertone in James Wray's playacting of the part. It's clear, though, that Paul causes his wife to feel "filmy and ephemeral", not quite real.

There's a productive element to

Dora's disorder: her behaviour at least is wholehearted and uncontrived, if never completely sensible or admirable. At Imber, she arouses mild irritation in Michael Meade, leader of the community and owner of Imber Court, whose antipathy, fortunately, is tempered with benignity. Michael, an ex-schoolmaster, who has made of Imber a kind of halfway house between the world and the cloister, is spiritually handicapped (in his own view) by an ineradicable imperfection: homosexual leanings. A number of exorbitant infatuations contribute to the plot of *The Bell*; one of these exists - or has existed - between Michael and his drunken ex-pupil Nick Fawley, now inhabiting the gate lodge at Imber, ostensibly to be near his sister Catherine who is staying at the Court before joining the nuns.

Nuns, homosexuals, innocents, hysterics, the prudish and the imprudent, the tortured and the tortuous; add a picturesque legend, a schoolgirl scheme, a couple of near-drownings, an Abbess, a Bishop, and a ceremony fated to go extravagantly wrong, and you have a list of ingredients that positively invites facetious comment. It would be wrong to make game, and nothing else, of the dramatization, however. Iris Murdoch's careful consideration of traits and motivations, her intricate symbolism and accuracy of explication, its true, are only of limited use to the dramatist who must rely, above all, on straightforward action and interaction between people. Fortunately, an abundance of events and set-pieces, all of them deftly transferred to the screen, makes the loss of the more discursive parts of the book seem relatively unimportant. The casting, too, could hardly have been bettered. Ian Holm is excellent as Michael Meade; Tessa Pease-Jones gets the right kind of gaucheness and exuberance into her portrayal of Dora; Trudie Styler as Catherine Fawley, the would-be postulant, gives a suitably highly-strung performance; and Michael Maloney makes an agreeably diffident and impersonable Toby Gashe.

Eighteen-year-old Toby, who has come to Imber at the invitation of Michael's second-in-command James Tapper Pace, is Dora's accomplice in a clandestine undertaking: a plan to raise a six-hundred-year-old bell from the bottom of a lake, and substitute it for a new bell which is due to be installed at the Abbey; this action Dora sees as a piece of prestidigitator, miracle-like in its felicity. "In this holy community she would play the witch."

With Dora playing the witch, her journalist boy-friend Noel Spens (less frivolous and more philistine than I think, than the author intended) arriving hot-foot from London to play the debunker, and Nick Fawley bent on playing the saboteur, a contretemps of monumental proportions is ensured. There is nothing random about the design or the moral implications of *The Bell*; it is based on a series of nightmarish reactions of past dramas. (It's the precise pattern of events, as well as the cool assurance of the narrative tone, that places the novel firmly in the genre of moral comedy), all of them involving betrayal of one kind or another. When the bell rings out (in the middle of the night) what it provides is a knell that summons members of the community to various bad ends.

It is a versatile symbol - too versatile, you might say. For Dora, it is a romantic "magical" object; in James's view, it stands for clarity and candour; Michael regards it as a symbol of "spiritual energy". For Catherine, there is not too much distinction between the bell and Sylvia Plath's "bell jar". In the novel, perhaps, the bell carries more weight than it can easily sustain; the television version, with its freer technique, and emphasis on verisimilitude rather than form, actually gets more out of the central emblem by making less of it.



A watercolour by Mrs W. Musgrave of William Makepeace Thackeray (left) with two companions - probably Isabella Shaw, whom Thackeray later married, and his brother Arthur, 1835. The picture is on show at the Covent Garden Gallery, 30 Russell Street, London WC2, until February 18.

## A kind of Ahab

By Richard Combs

Cutter's Way  
Various cinemas

*Cutter's Way* is after big game. The spring of its plot is a murder mystery - who killed a teenage hitch-hiker and left her mutilated body in an alley one rainy night in Santa Barbara? But finding the killer matters less than defining what he stands for. In other words, what is going on in the minds of his pursuers, and why they should want to pin the crime on the town's wealthiest and most powerful citizen, absorbs most of the film's attention. In the end, one is not even allowed the satisfaction of knowing whether or not he actually did it. One must assume either that the amateur sleuths are simply paranoid about men who have the power to "get away" with things, or that they are paranoid with good reason.

Big as this game is, however, it is not all that the film is after. Vietnam slides shifty in as an extra dimension to the story, and then, even more shifty, slides out again. The anonymous character, Alex Cutter (John Heard), is a Vietnam veteran who has returned minus an arm, a leg and an eye, and now stomps about his green and privileged homeland like some wrathful daemon, drunken, fractious, scornful of the country for which he has sacrificed so much of himself and scornful of his wife, Mo (Lan Elchhorn), and one close friend, Richard Bone (Jeff Bridges), who are trying to help him return to life. Out of his frustration and his "hunger" (as he describes it), Cutter fixes on oil tycoon J. J. Cord as the murderer, not only of the girl in the alley but of the better part of himself.

What makes one slightly uncomfortable about the Vietnam connection is the immediate glossiness of interpretation it allows. There is already a whole genre of movies about disgruntled veterans "bringing the war back home". But not even the more serious of them (Karel Reisz's *Dog Soldiers*, for instance) have managed to make more than sociological fodder out of the subject. Vietnam is still too large and recent a subject to be so easily reducible - although several reviewers of *Cutter's Way* have praised it for taking this as its message. Certainly the most japel-grabbing and stilted scene in an otherwise tightly-written script is one in which Cutter defines

for Bone and for us the meaning of Vietnam. But despite the constant presence of poor crippled Cutter, the war fades in significance as the biggest game of all comes into the film's sights.

This is first suggested as Cutter mockingly addresses Bone as his Ishmael and obviously intends that we should see him as a kind of Ahab. Cutter, one senses rather obscurely, used to be very much part of the wealthy Santa Barbara community, and has been set apart not just by unfortunate circumstances but by his own wilfulness. Bone, who seems the more privileged, is actually the drifter, footloose not only physically but morally (as Cutter eventually accuses him of being). Ironically, it is Bone who brings Cutter his Moby Dick. Having inadvertently been present in the alley on the night of the murder, Bone is questioned by the police, but can only remember seeing the shadowy figure of a man who then nearly ran him down in his car. Later, while watching a parade in Santa Barbara's Old Spanish Days fiesta (flooding the film with more American history, costumes and disguise), Bone sees J. J. Cord ride by on a horse and is certain for a moment that he was the man in the alley.

He changes his mind shortly afterwards, but Cutter seizes on the suggestion. With the help of the dead girl's sister, he begins building a crazy case against Cord, by which they will first extort money from him then hand him over to the police. Bone alternately resists the scheme and reluctantly goes along with it, perhaps because he finds it hard to stay out of Cutter's obsessive orbit or because he is half in love with Mo (who has made her own self-destructive commitment to Cutter). The relationship between the two men is the holding centre of the film, an intense and, in a way, diabolical manifestation of the American cinema's buddy theme. It also takes in some mordant reflections on the subject of heroism, with the image of a man on a white charger recurring throughout the film (reminiscent of the white whale). The director of *Cutter's Way* is Ivan Passer, who worked with Milos Forman in his native Czechoslovakia in the 1960s, and directed the well-known film *Intimate Lighting*, before going into exile in the United States. There he has made several films, which now look like mere preparation for this supremely strange act of cultural assimilation and detachment.

## New Oxford Books: History

## Davitt and Irish Revolution 1846-1882

T.W. Moody

Michael Davitt was an Irish revolutionary nationalist who abandoned republican orthodoxy to become the inspiring genius of a social revolution. In 1879 he founded the Irish National Land League, which successfully mobilized the tenant farmers against the landlords with the aim of resisting eviction and ultimately of abolishing 'landlordism' altogether. Illustrated £22.50 4 February

## English Lordship in Ireland 1318-1361

Robin Frame

In the fourteenth century the lordship of Ireland was joined to England not merely by formal government links, but also by sentiment and an intricate tissue of family and personal ties. This book discusses the character of the political society of the lordship, and traces the history of Anglo-Irish relations between 1318 and 1361, setting Ireland in the context of the wider concerns of the English monarchy in the age of the Scottish and French wars. £18.50

## Land and Society in Early Scotland

Robert A. Dodgshon

The aim of this book is to provide an overview of Scottish rural history from prehistoric times down to the eve of the Improvers' Movement in the eighteenth century. The author adopts the relationship between land and society as his central theme, and his emphasis throughout is on explaining rather than just describing the patterns and institutions of the early Scottish countryside. Illustrated £22.50

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John Lough

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## Zionism

The Formative Years David Vital

In this sequel to *The Origins of Zionism* the author traces and explains the emergence of the Zionist movement throughout which the Jews were to a large extent reformed as a political people. In 1897, Theodor Herzl launched the Zionist movement, and Professor Vital concentrates on the following decade which saw the establishment of the movement's main ideas and central institutions and its modes of political, social, and economic action. £22.50

Oxford  
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## commentary

## to the editor

## Tracing the lineage

By Celina Fox

Mr Walter Sickert and his Print-maker Friends and Relations  
Parkin Gallery, 11 Motcomb St,  
London SW1.

Sickert once remarked of the overpraised "illustrators of the sixties" that they did not contain sufficient stamina to make them worth breeding. An exhibition outlining a graphic lineage which starts with Whistler and ends with the Sickert "girls" provides an opportunity to aim the gibe rather closer to home.

Sickert and Mortimer Menpes (whose work is also represented) were as young men almost totally dependent on Whistler, accompanying him on his early morning sketching expeditions and imitating his style. They too concentrated on the essentials of a scene, hinting with a flickering, nervous line at depths undiscussed in the surrounding blank space. Velvety tonal effects were achieved with drypoint and thin films of ink wiped across the plate, the margins were trimmed close to the platemark. But by the late 1880s, under the influence of Degas, Sickert had moved away from the master and in a print of the beach at Scheveningen, not only is there a freshness in the observation of the curves of wicker *windstoelen* and umbrellas, but also a suggestion in the figures of the down-to-earth humour which is never far removed from his work.

By 1908, the friendship had been broken for over ten years and in reviewing the Pennells' life of Whistler, Sickert condemned his later prints as "a feast of facile and dainty sketching on copper". Sickert loathed what he saw as the amateurism of the loosely-called "revival of etching" of the late-nineteenth century; he constantly stressed the value of sound drawing and the need to reveal the

intrinsic characteristics of the medium. All his best works fulfil these requirements.

This show, which continues until February 13, contains a good selection from the Camden Town period, the Carfax series and those published by the Leicester Galleries in the 1920s. These latter works provide a fascinating comparison with the recent Late Sickert exhibition at the Hayward Gallery. Both in subject matter and technique, Sickert's prints were closely related to his drawings and oils. A work like "Cheerio", with its strong black-and-white abstractions of shape, has more energy and clarity than his painting of the same spectacle - a chorus-line of Plaza Tiller girls - and recalls the snapshots which provided the basis for so many late portraits.

Sickert taught both at established art schools and his own private classes, passing on his experience to pupils, the majority of whom were women. Michael Parkin has contributed more than anyone to the appreciation of their talents and in this exhibition there are prints by Sylvia Gosse, Enid Bagnold and Wendela Borel. They learnt from Sickert the Camden Town vocabulary of music-hall balconies and boarding-house rooms with iron bedsteads, before venturing with a certain air of diffidence to explore subject-matter further afield. But they lacked the asstringency of viewpoint and confidence to experiment on the plate, which gave Sickert's prints their strength. The faithful Sylvia Gosse continued to follow rather too closely his example while after her marriage, Wendela Borel, possibly the printmaker with the most original potential, worked only sporadically. Given Sickert's feelings about dilettantism, it is curious to reflect that he did more than most to encourage indylike dabbling. But compared with the overblown conventions of the painter-etchers, at least he fostered an unpretentious honesty of approach which bore, albeit delicate, fruit.

## On aluminium wings

By Robin Buss

Light Years Away  
Various cinemas

Alain Tanner's films are resolutely unitary and *Light Years Away* perhaps supports better than any other the director's assertion that it is image rather than narrative which provides the starting-point for his work. It is, however, also the first film he has adapted from a novel (Daniel Odier's *La vole sauvage*). The plot, such as it is, concerns the relationship between a young man and his mentor, the owner of an abandoned garage on the West Coast of Ireland; the narrative is episodic and if we believe at all in the wisdom of the old man, Yoshka, more by the rugged and obstinate landscape of Trevor Howard's face than by the mystical platitudes which issue from it.

Yoshka has luckily been provided with an income which allows him to survive long after his garage has become obsolete and the only witnesses to his former business are a dry petrol pump and heaps of cars in various stages of decay, the debris of automotive civilization. Here he tells a series of pointless tales, digressing the barren garden, mowing the pump, cleaning and sorting the wreckage of the long-dead cars. In exchange for this work, he reluctantly allows Jonas to share his food, and when Jonas, rebelling against the intimacy of his tasks, tries to intimidate himself with the "weakness" of Yoshka, he punks him back to life.

The tale of Yoshka's "sententious wisdom" and Jonas's "yeshonism" against

him, are seen as steps towards an understanding of the old man's closeness to the forces of nature, made only too explicit when he gets Jonas to bury him up to the neck in the vegetable patch - apparently the only use to which that piece of ground is put. Yoshka, we are to understand, has not retired from a decaying civilization for the Voltairian purpose of cultivating his garden; his great secret, which Jonas is ultimately permitted to share, is his desire to fly, like Icarus, but on aluminium wings. The implication is that man must re-learn an intuitive rather than a rational approach to the world and the film's message is simply his striving after an imaginative and non-utilitarian ideal. But "man" for Tanner does not equal "humankind"; there is a strong element of misogyny, summed up by Yoshka when he says "women do not want men to fly". Neither he, nor the film offer any real support for this bleak assertion, which Jonas comes to accept. The bird that finally strikes Yoshka down is an eagle.

However, it is not Tanner's intention to preach against the emptiness of urban life or the inhibiting effects of sexual relationships on the pursuit of an ideal. It is the image, not the message, that we are meant to retain. He constructs his myth with meticulous artistry, leading us from the apocryphal Irish environment of the city, with its pubs and yellow buses, to the desolate landscape of a Atlantic coast where he can seduce his mistress. It is the timeless value of this conviction which Trevor Howard and Mick Ford bring to their interpretation of the two main parts. By the scenery, the irruption of colour and violence against the background of grey hills and watery skies. It is in these terms, not by virtue of its facile mysticism, that the film works.

## The Ethics of Abortion

Sir, - It is gratifying that L. W. Sumner (Letters, December 4) had to resort to an argument from silence to respond to my observation that it is inappropriate to refer to an unborn child as a parasite. He says, "A parasite is an organism that lives on or in another and draws its nourishment therefrom" (*Stedman's Medical Dictionary*). The parasite need not be of a different species from the host." Dictionaries rarely waste space excluding conditions which obviously do not apply. Can Sumner name any organism studied by parasitologists that lives on or in a host of its own species?

The phrase "the burden of proof" may come from the law courts but surely the underlying principle does not. Sumner contends that the moral obligation on pro-abortionists to prove that unborn children are not truly human, lest they condone homicide, is negated by an alleged equal obligation on anti-abortionists to prove that unborn children are truly human, lest we wrongfully interfere with the autonomy of women. This position assumes that autonomy and human life itself are of equal value, and ignores the difference between the temporary nature of pregnancy and the permanent result of homicide. Sumner also ignores my analogy with heart transplants in which, discussing the surgeon's moral obligation to prove that the prospective donor had died before he removes the heart, I said, "Removing the heart prematurely would be wrong, even though the prospective recipient would die if he did not receive a new heart promptly."

A full discussion of the claim that not all members of *homo sapiens* have the same moral status would be beyond the scope of this correspondence. I shall just point out the danger which seems to have escaped the notice of Sumner by referring to history. Eugenists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries wanted to create what Margaret Sanger, a prominent eugenicist, called "a race of thoroughbreds". This respectable racism, which labelled Jews, Slavs, blacks, and the mentally and physically handicapped "human weeds", prepared the way for the more drastic programme of eugenics put into effect by Hitler. If any members of the human species can be declared to be not truly human, none of us is safe.

MARTIN W. HELGENSEN,  
11 Lawrence Avenue, Malvern,  
New York 11565.

## Johnson's Last Words

Sir, - Donald Greene has recently written (Letters, December 25) about the "Author, Author" Competition No 36 (for which you printed the answers on July 17) and uses the occasion to comment on the presumed last words of Samuel Johnson. The entire competition raises some interesting questions about the last words of famous people as well as about Johnson and Boswell.

The first quotation from Competition 36, "Give Dayrolles a chair", is readily identifiable as the last words of the fourth Earl of Chesterfield, Johnson's quondam patron. But did Chesterfield ever use those words? Our source, his first biographer Dr Matthew May, whose *Memories of Lord Chesterfield* first appeared as the preface to Chesterfield's *Miscellaneous Works* (2 vols, 1777), was not present at Chesterfield's death. In his *Memories*, May quotes the "last words" and then adds, "These were the last words he was heard to speak. They were characteristic and were remarked by the very able and attentive physician who was then in the room. His good breeding said that gentleman, only *quits him with his life*". In a note, May says that the physician was "Dr. Warren, physician to the king", presumably

Richard Warren, MD (1731-97). We do not know how reliable a witness Warren was, but his own comment about Chesterfield's good breeding would make sense only if the Earl were at the very point of death. In fact, as Maty says, Chesterfield died later that day. It is strange that Maty relied for the accuracy of this statement on Dr Warren and not on Solomon Dayrolles himself, with whom Chesterfield actually spoke. "Give Dayrolles a chair" may be accurate, but it sounds doctored to me - a deathbed statement with an epigrammatic comment from a witness is decidedly unusual and hence slightly dubious.

Competition 56 continued with "This hath not offended the king", the last words of Sir Thomas More on the scaffold. All sixteenth-century accounts of More's execution agree that he did lift his long grey beard across the block so that the headsman's axe would not sever it, but More's biographers and family were not present on the scaffold or even at the execution (his daughter Margaret may have been in the crowd). More's sixteenth-century biographers - his son-in-law William Roper, Nicholas Harpsfield, and "Ro. Ba." mention various last words, but say nothing about this particular anecdote. Neither does Thomas Stapleton's Latin life (*Vita Thomae*, 1588). Not until the biography by More's grandson, Crescens More (Paris, 1637), do we find More saying anything about his beard and then, according to the grandson's account, he removed his beard from the block, saying, "That had never committed treason" (the *DNB* follows this account). "This hath not offended the king", with its unseemly archaizing of the verb, seems to date from the more hagiographical lives of More that began to appear in the nineteenth century, but all the available evidence suggests that More himself said nothing of the kind.

Now we come to Johnson's supposed last words. The competition, as Donald Greene points out, followed Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, with "God bless you, my dear," John Hoole's account of Johnson's last days, which first appeared in 1799, and which G. B. Hill printed in *Johnsonian Miscellanies* (2 vols, 1897) and O. M. Brack, Jr. from Hoole's manuscript in 1972, reduces that phrase to "God bless you" and adds that later Johnson "said something upon [a cup of milk] not being properly given into his hands". Sir John Hawkins added another version in his *Life* (1787), "I am mortuus". There is still another account, which appears in the anonymous *Life of Samuel Johnson*, LL.D. (1786): "The next night he was at intervals delirious and in one of those fits, seeing a friend at the bedside, he exclaimed, 'What a fellow never have done talking poetry to me!' He recovered his senses before morning, but spoke little after this" (*The Early Biographies of Samuel Johnson*, ed. O. M. Brack, Jr. and Robert B. Kelley, 1974, p. 241).

Donald Greene correctly points out that Boswell had a copy of Hoole's narrative about Johnson's last days and thinks that Boswell, since he chose to follow another account of Johnson's last words, is guilty of "falsification". Perhaps so. But the evidence does not point toward falsification. Greene says that Hoole's commentary is a "first-hand account". But it is not a first-hand account of Johnson's death, it is only a first-hand account of what Hoole says happened around eleven o'clock of the morning of the day on which Johnson died (December 13, 1784). Hoole continues, "I left him in that state [ie, in a calm sleep or daze] and never saw him more alive". Hoole says that he learnt of Johnson's death, which happened eight hours later, around seven that evening, later that night.

Boswell's literary artifice aside, we know that he possessed a lawyer's training in dealing with evidence, so if he rejected Hoole's account of

Johnson's last words, he must have had reason to believe that he was not a trustworthy witness or that there was a better witness available. And, of course, Boswell knew that Hoole had not been present at Johnson's deathbed. His presentation of Johnson's last moments in the *Life* is especially careful. Donald Greene says that Boswell gives Johnson's statement to Miss Morris, "God bless you, my dear!" and that she "states categorically": "These were the last words he spoke". Actually, Boswell does not state anything at all. Instead, he writes, "Of his last moments, my brother, Thomas David [Boswell (1748-1826)], has furnished me with the following particulars", and then follows with the well-known account as a quotation from his brother, clearly identified as such in the text. The categorical statement, if that is what it is, is not by Boswell, it is by Boswell's brother. No contemporary witness mentions whether Thomas Boswell was also present at Johnson's deathbed; I doubt it. Perhaps Boswell had his brother gather these materials for him. But the fact that Boswell presents his account of Johnson's last moments through indirect statement, in the words of a neutral person, suggests that he recognized the problem of authenticity and the accuracy of witnesses and that other considerations - after all, Boswell wrote to me present at Johnson's bedside - prompted him to doubt the word of John Hoole, the version of Sir John Hawkins, and the story in the anonymous 1786 *Life*.

Of the three "last words" in Competition 56, then, I should say that those attributed to More are certainly false, those assigned to Chesterfield are highly unlikely, and Johnson's are most likely to be correct in the form that Boswell gave them. Boswell was sometimes inaccurate, as Donald Greene points out, but there is no evidence that he deliberately falsified Johnson's last words. Indeed, I would say that this exercise shows how well Boswell could deal with conflicting evidence.

PAUL J. KORSHIN,  
Department of English, University  
of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia 19104.

## Translating 'Beowulf'

Sir, - T. A. Shippey's review (January 1) of my attempt at translating *Beowulf* into French proves a useful mixture of praise and strictures and even suggests room for some beneficial alterations. For this I am grateful. However, it is all a shade out of perspective.

I was addressing French readers and clearly a literal rendering would have remained opaque, not to say meaningless, as was at pains to point out in a longish introduction. The tone of the original work, too, had to be made amenable to French ears. I had therefore to depend on more or less - transposed version in which the spirit of the book would not evaporate. Perhaps in this I could have been more personal - more of an interpreter.

On one point, T. A. Shippey is both inaccurate and unfair. He quotes me as finding "un peu puériles" my historical speculations about the poem. Now this was but an incidental remark regarding fairly remote matters, and thus unrelated to the overall Scandinavian English background which, granted limited space, I had thought exposed in a tolerably comprehensive manner.

But not to end on a sour note, may I add that I find English and French literatures less far apart than he suggests. As an example of this, I would like to refer him to Dorothy Sayers who, in an excellently introduced *Le Chant de Roland* to English readers, admitted, she did not have to ponder whether shades are more dignified than feet.

JEAN QUEVAL,  
77850 Héric, France.

## Women and Pornography

Sir, - I read with much amusement the letters by Jane Aiken Hodge and J. A. Penrose (Letters, January 15) attacking my review of J. G. Weightman and Roger Scruton (January 1) for their, and indeed, the world's, "sexism". However, the smile faded from my face somewhat when I came to Jane Aiken Hodge's suggestion that you give "significant books about women to women for review". My impression is that this has already been the disastrous policy of the *TLS* for the past three years at least. One might as well ask a Kremlin bureaucrat to review significant books about Marxism, the scholarly and entertainment value of the result would be the same. I had hoped that the reviews by Weightman and Scruton were the beginning of a new editorial trend. Indeed, you might consider having significant books about women reviewed by individuals known for their anti-feminism. This could have the joint benefit of giving your readers a more trenchant view of a book they might be thinking of buying, and, secondly, some truly critical analysis of feminist ideology might result in an improvement in the quality of feminist writings. I admit that the latter possibility is remote, but, as the red-jackets used to say as they charged at the entrenched positions of the grim and humourless Boers, "I say, what sport!"

JACK BENSON,  
Amerbachstrasse 80, CH 4057  
Basel, Switzerland.

## 'Sexist Language'

Sir, - I am puzzled by a sentence in Roger Scruton's review of *Sexist Language* (January 1). "Even the American Modern Language Association," he writes, "for many years a bastion of serious criticism and literary scholarship, has resolved to remove all 'irrelevant' uses of gender from its publications." The editorial policy of *PMLA* reminds our readers that the "MLA urges its contributors to be sensitive to the social implications of language and to seek wordings free of discriminatory overtones." Nowhere, though, do we

mention the "irrelevant" - but let me hasten to add that I would be happy to see us go on record as opposing irrelevances, whether gender-laden or otherwise. What is the function of a bastion of serious criticism, after all, if not to protect language against those who would misuse it?

JOEL CONARROE,  
The Modern Language Association  
of America, 62 Fifth Avenue, New  
York, NY 10011.

## Thomas Jefferson

Sir, - Stephan Thernstrom (Letters, January 8), in his understandable zeal to point out my mistake in ascribing the United States Constitution, rather than the Declaration of Independence, to Jefferson, has been led, by a misplaced residual trust in my reliability, to implicate Donald Hall in my error. Had Mr Thernstrom's scholarly enthusiasm been strong enough to induce him to look at the work being reviewed before his premature critical ejaculation, he would have seen that Donald Hall is blameless. Had I stuck closer to him I should not have exposed myself to Mr Thernstrom's reproaches.

ANTHONY QUINTON,  
Trinity College, Oxford.

## Codswallop

Sir, - I wonder, am I alone in finding many infelicities in the new edition of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*?

I use the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* for the purpose of checking the meanings of words; it seems to me often inadequate, give only one example in detail, though I could offer more than half a dozen of the first thirty or so words that I looked up, which seems a high proportion.

The word: *Codswallop*. The *COD* defines it as "nonsense". That is both facile and incorrect. Chambers has it more accurately: "nonsense put forward as if serious idea or information". We are all familiar with the phrase "a load of old codswallop", meaning an untrue sort of story such as might be put forward by a Defendant in a criminal trial. Also, the *COD* gives only the spelling "codswallop", but surely the first spelling is "codswallop".

(from its origin). The *COD* gives: "20th c., origin unknown". That must be simple ignorance. Mr Codd (a northerner, I think Lancastrian) sold lemonade and/or "wallop". He watered down this lemonade or wallop, and his products came to be known derisively as Mr Codd's wallop. And later codswallop. That is to say, something pretending or appearing to be what it was not, and, derived therefrom, something put forward as if to be taken seriously but being in fact a load of old codswallop. Thus the *COD* is wrong on the meaning, infelicitous on the spelling, and ignorant as to origin.

Some other words with unsatisfactory appendages in the *COD*, and, at that, more common and simple words: Morsel, Mouthful, Bowl (in the game of bowls, with a really grotesque definition), Bias, Blich, Oyster (as in oyster bacon), Bannister, Newel, Conthanger.

COLIN VINES,  
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## Daniel Defoe

Sir, - May I add a "Bastianism" in connection with Peter Earle's review of F. Bastian's *Defoe's Early Life* (December 11) in which he discusses the pleasurable activity Bastian has enjoyed?

Defoe, well into the fashionable market for travel books and atlas-making, must have known all about Mr Moll. And one might suppose the title of Defoe's famous novel *Moll Flanders* could have come from his reading an advertisement:

Books sold by Bell in Cornhill, and J. Darby in Bartholomew Close . . . The History of Flanders, from its first establishment as a Principality, to the Death of the last K. of Spain. With Mr. Moll's Map of the Country.

Although I cannot establish the date this advertisement appeared (since the title page of the ancient volume in which it appears is missing), Bell and Darby, anxious to stress the up-to-date-ness of other histories in the same advertisement, stress that their *History of France* is taken up to 1702 and that of the Turks (which in-

cludes another map by Moll) goes up to 1711.

In an edition of Quarles's *Emblems* of 1723, Messrs Bettesworth, Bailey and Combes of Paternoster-Row, in their announcement of "Books lately Published," need only one line list "Moll's Geography, Folio 20s." - so people knew all about Moll.

GEOFFREY ROBINSON,  
19-21 Newbury Street, Whitechurch, Hampshire RG28 7LQ.

## Matsumoto Seicho

Sir, - I was delighted to read James Melville's analysis of Japanese mystery fiction (October 30). However, it should be noted that the name of the man who inherited the mantle of Edogawa Rampo is not Matsumoto Sei-ichi but, rather, Matsumoto Seichō. The confusion, I suspect, lies in the alternative reading of the character *chō* - which is *ichū*.

For those readers who wish to find out more about this author and his prolific output, there is a pioneering article by Mamie Kamada entitled "The Awkward Writer: Opinions about and the influence of Matsumoto Seichō"; it was published in the Spring 1978 issue of *The Japan Interpreter*. I believe it is the only article of any length about Mr Matsumoto in English.

DAVID SALCEDO,  
2749 Geranium Court, Fairfield,  
California 94533.

## Medieval Parliaments

Sir, - In his review of *The English Parliament in the Middle Ages* (December 18), E. B. Fryde has grossly misrepresented me. He says that in speaking of legislation "in the less tense and urgent atmosphere of the 1350s" I ignore the economic and social upheaval caused by the plague of 1348/9. Read in their context (p. 46), these words are quite plainly a description of relations between the king and the nobility, not of the state of England. For, as I have argued, it was precisely the apprehension of economic and social upheaval which produced harmony among the propertied classes in par-

liament during this decade, and facilitated the passage of legislation, including of course the Statute of Labourers.

Neither did I ignore the "mounting popular unrest" to which Fryde rightly sees legislation and taxation contributing in the 1370s. If he will read again my pages (pp 56-61) on the Good Parliament he will note the emphasis placed on the background of "unusual economic and social strain" and "popular discontent", and the argument that the Commons were at least partly prompted to attack misgovernment because this was "commonly recognised as provoking the turbulence of the peasantry and the mob which the landlord class feared beyond all".

G. L. HARRISS,  
Magdalen College, Oxford.

## Execution by Drowning

Sir, - In reviewing George Leggett's *The Cheka* (December 11), Robert Conquest appears to suggest that only "individuals" were drowned at Nantes in the Year II whereas the Cheka disposed of "bargeloads" in their own noyades.

However, the evidence taken after the Nantes massacres makes clear that it was precisely in "bargeloads" that the victims of Carrier died. On December 23, 1793, for example, 800 persons were drowned in two large boats and in a later episode 300 died in a single vessel. Indeed, Jacques Godechot estimates that between 2,800 and 4,600 were executed at Nantes by this means alone during the repression which followed the defeat of the Vendémian revolt.

Interestingly, Godechot concludes (like Ullam on the Bolsheviks) that this excess of terror recruited support for the counter-revolution and made victory more difficult to achieve.

D. J. WALSH,  
80 Ladbroke Grove, London W11.

We regret that in the notice of Richard S. Peterson's *Imitation and Praise in the Poems of Ben Jonson* (December 11) the price of the book was wrongly stated. It is available from Yale University Press at £12.95.

## Information, please

**Sunday Freedom Association:** current location of the archives of this organization or any information relating to the nineteenth-century popular, anti-sabbatarian organizations, the *Sunday Society* and the *National Sunday League*: for a book.

Laurence Marlow,  
Social Science Department, South Bank Polytechnic, London SE1 0AA.

**Patrick Barrington,** author of *Songs of a Sub-Man* (1934): information sought about the author, and present copyright holder.

M. Paffard,  
Education Department, University of Keele, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG.

**Frederick Sadleir Breerton** (1872-1957), writer of boys' books: whereabouts of archives, personal papers, letters and any information; id assist in a bibliography.

M. Wyatt,  
33 Sturges Road, Wokingham, Berkshire.

**John Drinkwater** (1882-1937), English playwright: personal recollections sought from family and friends; also copies of letters or photographs.

Irene Edwards,  
38 Sandhurst Road, Wokingham, Berkshire.

**Kate O'Brien,** Irish novelist: any personal recollections, letters, drafts, manuscripts, etc; for a bibliography.

Joseph Ambrose,  
58 Upper Rathmuns Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6, Ireland.

**John Lodge Elerton,** author of *Triemmain, an Opera* (about 1862) and *L. W. Halden,* author of *Triemmain or Merle's Spell* (copyrighted 1873): whereabouts of copies for a study of Scott adaptations.

Kurt Gammerschlag,  
Englisches Seminar der Universität Bonn, Regina-Palais Weg 5, 5300 Bonn, German Federal Republic.

**Hyde Park House, Albert Gale,** London: residence in the 1890s of Sir Herbert Scarisbrick, Naylor-Leyland, 1st Baronet; any information, photographs, sketches, accounts, etc; for a biographical sketch of Lady Naylor-Leyland.

F. X. Roellinger,  
351 Elm Street, Oberlin, Ohio 44074.

**Gilbert O. Thomas,** author, poet and literary critic: any correspondence or personal recollections; to help create a possible Gilbert Thomas collection.

Ruth Johns,  
4 Castle Close, Warwick CV34 4DB.

**Ann Ward,** eighteenth-century York printer: whereabouts of books printed by her; also letters and legal documents connected with her.

Suzanne Luchford,  
Institute of Bibliography and Textual Criticism, School of English, University of Leeds, Leeds.

## Among this week's contributors

**FLEUR ADCOCK's** most recent volume of poems, *The Inner Harbour*, was published in 1979.

**MICHAEL BANTON** is Professor of Sociology at the University of Bristol. His books include *The Idea of Race*, 1977.

**ROSALIND BELDEN's** most recent novel is *Dreaming of Dead People*, 1979.

**NICHOLAS BEST's** novel *Where Were You at Waterloo?* was published last year.

**VICTOR BROMBERG's** most recent book is *The Romanist Prison*, 1978.

**LORD CARVER** was Chief of the Defence Staff from 1973-76. His most recent book is *The Apostles of Mobility*, 1979.

**RICHARD COMBS** is the editor of the British Film Institute's *Monthly Bulletin*.

**WENDY COPE** is one of the poets whose work is included in Faber's *Poetry Introduction Five*, 1981.

**ALAN COREN** is the editor of *Punch*.

**DOUGLAS DUNN's** most recent collection of poems is *St Kilda's Parliament*, 1981.

**JOHN L. FLOOD** is Deputy Director of the Institute of Germanic Studies at the University of London.

**MICHAEL GRANT's** books include *Latin Literature*, 1978, and *The Etruscans*, 1980.

**PHYLLIS GROSSKURTH's** biography of Hayek Ellis was published in 1980.

**BRIAN HARRISON's** books include *Drink and the Victorians: the Temperance Question in England, 1872-1915*, 1971.

**F. W. J. HEMMING'S** Professor of French at the University of Leicester. His *Baudelaire the Damned* will be published shortly.

**GRAHAM HOUGH's** books include *An Essay in Criticism*, 1973.

**PETER KEATING** is the author of *The Working Classes in Victorian Britain*, 1971, and editor of *Into Unknown Britain*, 1977.

**JOHN KEEGAN's** books include *The Face of Battle*, 1976.

**A. N. RYAN** is Reader in Modern History at the University of Liverpool. He is the general editor of the *Navy Records Society*.

**S. SCHÖNBUM's** most recent book is *William Shakespeare: Records and Images*, 1981.

**T. A. SHIPPEY** is Professor of English Language at the University of Leeds.

**QUENTIN SKINNER** is Professor of Political Science at the University of Cambridge. His books include *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 1978.

**PETER STRAD** is a lecturer in History at the University of College of Swansea.

**B. H. WARMINGTON's** books include *Nero: Reality and Legend*, 1970.



# Eros analysed

By Andrew Hislop

PETER LEHMAN and WILLIAM LUHR:  
Blake Edwards  
288pp. Ohio University Press.  
£13.30. (Paperback, £6.30).  
0 8214 0605 1

A director who ends a film (*The Great Race*) with a shot of the Eiffel Tower collapsing into a heap does invite the view that he is concerned with symbols of phallic failure. However, even after the sexual comedy *10*, Blake Edwards may not spring to everyone's mind as a practitioner in the modern cinema of phallic failure, and as an exponent not only of radical techniques in film narrative but also of innovative celluloid attitudes to sex. In *Blake Edwards*, Peter Lehman and William Luhr, with many interesting examples, much theoretical restraint, more than a little repetition and varied success, argue such a case.

For all but the most literal-minded they more than prove their point about the persistence in Edwards's oeuvre of a phallic presence which is often under threat. Gushing champagne bottles abound in poignant places and pop prematurely, as in *The Pink Panther* when Clouseau is attempting to make love to his wife. Inspector Dreyfus cuts his thumb off in his miniature guillotine cigar-cutter in *A Shot in the Dark* and shoots his nose off in *The Return of the Pink Panther*. In *The Revenge of the Pink Panther* Clouseau risks mutilation when - having failed to tame the leather-clad, whip-wielding Tanya the Lotus-Eater with the admonition "I warn you, Tanya the Lotus, I am opposed to the women's lib" - he stumbles groin first into an electric fan. In *The Great Race*, Dr Fate's machines become progressively more phallic until he is propelled into the air with his "companion", Max, in a rocket-type contraption. In *Operation Petticoat*, Cary Grant's submarine is painted pink and five female nurses are smuggled on board. In the Western *Wild Rovers* a cowboy, Ross Bodine, treats his wounded friend Frank Post (what's in a name?) by plunging a red-hot knife into his leg. In *Happy Feet*, "Mitch" Mitchell, an ageing actor, accidentally breaks off a slender leg post while telling a woman in the bed that it would be inadvisable for them to have a physical relationship. And so on and so on. The book even contains a photograph of Edwards himself on set, fondling the suggestively-shaped Pink Panther jewel.

Lehman and Luhr are equally convincing about the prevalence of transvestism and voyeurism in Edwards's work. (Space does not allow another list.) *Operation Petticoat* provides a variation of transvestism with a pig being successfully disguised as a man. The interplay of people watching and being watched is a common Edwards theme, but voyeurism is most explicit in *The Perfect Furlough* in which a group of men in an Arctic base try to satisfy their desires vicariously through pictures and by one of them taking a holiday with a film star; and in *10*, in which Dudley Moore is driven to obsessive pursuit by the sight of Bo Derek on her wedding day. The voyeuristic and the phallic even combine in *10* with Moore and his neighbour both directing telescopes at each other in search of erotic views, and such a combination has also a penetrative quality in *The Pink Panther Strikes Back* when Inspector Dreyfus thrusts his periscope through the floor of Clouseau's flat.

The problem with such an approach is that it is at once dependent for its significance on a particular theory of the unconscious - psychoanalysis; and divorced from that theory by becoming a part of ordinary culture which has anyway long been immemorially allowed people consciously to make jokes about phallic-themed objects in the case of critical works. Familiarity with such concepts may give readers the feeling

that they know what is being talked about but it also enables authors to avoid explaining exactly what they are saying. That a mishmash of Freud has seeped into our understanding makes it more necessary for them to spell out in detail what they think in theory is the significance of concepts derived from Freud's work. That treacherous metaphor, the dust-jacket, promises us that Lehman and Luhr apply "recent psychoanalytical and feminist critical methods". The spectre of Lacan raises its theoretical head but the old showman of the Ecole Freudienne never materializes, nor indeed do any recent psychoanalytical or feminist theorists (if we discount a couple of passing references to Barthes and one to Stephen Heath). This no doubt makes *Blake Edwards* more comprehensible, and perhaps more enjoyable, but it does make the theoretical basis behind its assumptions open to question. Lacan may be incomprehensible and/or wrong but one cannot accuse him of glib acceptance of the significance of the phallus.

A simplistic view is that Edwards repeatedly uses symbols of phallic failure, etc in his comedies because they are accepted, recognizable conventions which make people laugh. Lehman and Luhr are concerned less with castration as a vehicle for comedy than with comedy as means of tolerating castration and making more palatable what they see as a fundamental ideological position in the films. If not the life-styles, of Hollywood: "Edwards's inability to send his characters off in happy couples in the Clouseau films goes virtually unnoticed because of the comic form. In fact, it is the comic form that allows Clouseau almost literally to castrate himself." Indeed, Clouseau's near mutilations are less threatening than the unkindness cuts found in the cinema of Oshima and Ferreri, and Inspector Dreyfus's powers of recuperation from injury in the previous film are most comforting. And, without going into details, there is no doubt that in many films Edwards eschews "happy couple" endings.

But to what extent are these tendencies, "ideologically" important? *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, though not overtly the most shocking of films, has been acclaimed by certain critics as a significantly influential Hollywood film in its treatment of sex, and even by the celebrated director of pornographic films, Raulo Metzger, who thinks that Edwards, or Mr Julie Andrews as he calls him, made the most influential movie in the area of breaking down old taboos and letting permissiveness come in. And that was *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. I don't think anybody realized what a giant step that picture represented. It was his acceptance of the forbidden - done with a fairly light touch - that really made me do *Dirty Girls*.

Lehman and Luhr think that *10* "may have a similar and more profound impact on the 1980s".

Their analysis of *10*, however, though acute in many of its individual perceptions, does not justify such a pessimistic conclusion. They see the film as containing an overt expression of "tenderness" in Edwards's earlier work which had previously been confined to a "sub-text": "*10* includes and names homosexuality, voyeurism and impotence". Thus, though the "implicit homosexuality" of the relationship between Clouseau and Cato (the karate-chopping Chinese manservant who repeatedly attacks him when he is trying to seduce a woman) is latent, the phallic failure symbolic in *10* they are stated openly: in the discussions George (Dudley Moore) has with his black analyst and with his homosexual lyricist, in his incapacity in a one-night stand, in his visual obsession with Jenny (Bo Derek), and so on.

But if charting the relationship between "text" and "subtext" is difficult (even without any concessions being made to post-structuralism), with implicit and explicit expressions of sex it is treacherously question-

## Images of immobility

By Nick Roddick

DAVID BORDWELL:  
The Films of Carl-Theodor Dreyer  
281pp. University of California Press, £17.50.  
0 520 03987 4

In many ways, Carl-Theodor Dreyer is the acid test for the film buff in search of the correct cultural response: a director who is on the plus side foreign, dead and difficult and on the minus side, boring, rigidly formalistic and religiously inclined. He was never a prolific director. He made two feature films in Denmark and Germany between 1918 and 1925, and then, in just under forty years, directed the five features on which his international reputation rests: *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* in 1927, *Vampyr* in 1932, and thereafter one feature per decade - *Day of Wrath* (1944), *Order* (1954) and *Gertrud* (1964), each one more inaccessible than the last. Yet few serious critics would deny his importance. His films are regularly shown, other directors have paid direct or indirect homage to him (Godard and Michel Delahaye could exclaim in *Cahiers du Cinéma* that there is "no great film which does not go back to Dreyer, the crux of the modern cinema").

David Bordwell's *The Films of Carl-Theodor Dreyer* is by no means the first book on the director, but it is by far the best. It is thorough, precise, eloquent, admirably docu-

mented and beautifully produced: almost every illustration is a frame enlargement rather than a still, and each one consistently appears on the same page as the reference to it in the text (a rare achievement in even the most lavish of film books).

Like the films about which he writes, Bordwell's account is both fascinating and somewhat difficult. Unlike previous critics, he does not try by verbal and intellectual sleight of hand to knock the awkward edges off Dreyer, or to find in his films some vague but triumphant spiritual unity. He takes as his premise their contradictions and ambivalences, noting the apparent gap between content and form (*Jeanne d'Arc*, for instance, is a religious film in which the religious message is unclear, *Vampyr* a horror story in which the plot is downright confusing): "What we must keep before us," writes Bordwell, "is the gap - not in order to resolve it, but to specify the conditions of its existence." His main critical reference point is Russian Formalism, and in particular Victor Shklovsky, "the technique of art is to make objects unfamiliar, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the progress of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object."

Analysing certain of Dreyer's early films and all his major features at considerable length, Bordwell brilliantly demonstrates the "artfulness" of the director's work, pointing out the terms in which the films operate and the demands they make on us. Above all, he notes their refusal to submerge the procedures of cinematic expression beneath the overriding demands of storytelling; he finds in Dreyer's main films a "teleology of the shot" relatively free from narrative demands, in which strategies of camera movement, editing, lighting, grouping and even performance obey a series of laws and construct a network of meanings which run parallel, and occasionally counter, to the narrative. Put another way, Dreyer's films achieve "the subordination of the playing space to the total frame space", creating a world in which cinematic language frequently gives prominence to its own devices, avoiding that "terse acquiescence to the actors' behaviour" which characterizes the traditional (Hollywood) style.

What most distinguishes Bordwell's book, however, is the fact that it is a great deal more than an exhaustive study of a single director. "Dreyer's work," he argues, "claims our attention because it poses important problems for the study of cinema as art, industry, and historical

process": it "makes us do criticism differently". I am far from convinced that the book has much to tell us about the cinema as an industry, but it does combine in a rare way two frequently distinct strains of film criticism: authorial monographs, and theoretical discourses on film language. Bordwell is not content to assume that a film director is a complete artist whose aims and methods it is enough to describe, nor does he lose sight of the specifics of cinema in a complex and self-sufficient theoretical argument. What he does is to use Dreyer as a means of exploring the way in which cinema, and particularly certain elusive areas of film language, can have meaning over and above the straightforward and generally non-cinematic content of the narrative, and at the same time to test and define the resulting theoretical notions by meticulous and repeated examination of their practical operation.

The book is not without its weaknesses. Despite his overall eloquence - and certain unexpected flashes of humour - Bordwell is unable to resist flying the assertive flag of modern structuralist criticism from time to time: shots and sequences do not simply mean, they become "charged with intelligibility", while characters find themselves mediating "between the dynamic heterogeneity of the film's motifs and the stability of an overarching causal structure". Likewise, it is occasionally difficult to avoid wondering, in an old-fashioned sort of way, whether such detailed but necessarily selective analysis could not have found the same (or similar) patterns in almost any group of films, and whether it was really Dreyer's intention that "the emptiness of *Gertrud* persistently seems to negate meaning", or for his "bare-dom" to be "primarily negative, even punishing". Above all, the concluding chapter on "Dreyer's Uses" adopts, however guardedly, a version of the once fashionable but surely idealistic *Cahiers du Cinéma* position that, despite a consistently conservative standpoint, Dreyer's cinema is nonetheless radical because, through being difficult, it points up the "gaps and dislocations" in the dominant ideology. Indeed, most of the last chapter, with its curious reference to Brecht and its even more curious claim that modern avant-garde filmmakers such as Strömberg and Huitfeldt "negate and surpass Dreyer's cinema of immobility", seems to force itself to a conclusion. The films of Carl-Theodor Dreyer need no such apologies for their existence: the issues Bordwell raises, the analyses he conducts and the areas of inquiry he illuminates, are enough to qualify the book as a major contribution to the literature of film theory and criticism.

## The pelvis on the slab

By Blake Morrison

ALBERT GOLDMAN:  
Elvis  
598pp. Allen Lane. £9.95.  
0 7139 1474 2

In the penultimate chapter comes the moment towards which Albert Goldman's massive book has been steadily building. Having spent nearly 600 pages demolishing Elvis Presley's reputation he is now finally allowed to describe the demolition of his body. Dead from an overdose, Presley lies on a stainless steel table in a morgue awaiting the autopsy that will reveal the presence in his body of no less than eleven different drugs - among them valium, codeine, morphine and three kinds of barbiturate.

With a patience that smacks of macabre delight, Goldman catalogues each step of the post-mortem: the "Y incision" from shoulders to pubic bone that allows the pathologist to pin back the skin; the sawing of the ribcage; the opening of the stomach; the slicing of each major organ. Lovingly he dwells on the stigma of dissolution: the skin "pitted with countless needle marks"; "the fat face swollen with gorged blood"; the enlarged heart, clogged arteries and the liver "so diseased it looked exactly like pâté de foie gras". Then comes the climax:

"The scalp is cut and pulled both backwards over the nape of the neck and forward over the face to expose the surface of the skull. The entire top of the head is then cut off with a power saw, which sends puffs of dust into the atmosphere against which the operators protect themselves by donning face masks. When the top of the skull is lifted off like a bowl, the brain beneath is examined and then scooped out for sampling and sectioning. . . . The three hour procedure terminates with the remains of the brain being put back inside the skull and the internal organs gathered in a bag and stuffed back inside the body cavity, which is then stitched up."

If we are reminded, here, of Dante's Count Ugolino, his jaw clamped to and feasting on the brain of Archbishop Roger, this is appropriate, for as reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic have been quick to point out Goldman's is one of the most venal and cannibalistic biographies ever written. Posing as a coolly conducted post-mortem which will pick its way among the evidence so as to get at the truth of Elvis Presley's life, it's really more of a hatchet-job, never so happy as when it is cutting up, taking apart, laying into. Biographers are sometimes said to have a love-hate relationship with their subjects: Goldman is unusual in dispensing with the love element entirely, his animosity towards Presley tempered only by his ever greater animosity towards Colonel Parker, Elvis's manager, in whose Machiavellian hands the King often seems a lowly serf. "The King is Dead, Long Live his Enemies" would seem to be the sentiment.

Goldman's antagonism, we now know, backfired on him: reviewers have derided his book; reading it, even the most resolute Elvis-haters have ended up feeling protective towards the victim. Yet Goldman has perhaps had an unduly hard time of it, however unpleasant his book, it makes vivid and compelling reading. There are some excellent anecdotes: Presley flying his private plane from Memphis to Denver in order to buy some peanut butter and jelly sandwiches from a hotel that does a nice line in them. There is some useful research, too - on the influence of Presley on Memphis's WDIA radio station; on his performance in *Jailhouse Rock* and other films; and on his 1968 "Singer Special" television hit - hipster slang ("raunchy", "heavy", "cool", "savage") and some bizarre packages of rock herole, the book is written with zest, wit (on Elvis's attractiveness, for example: "he struck a chord in women all right: the unbalanced cord"), and Dickensian gusto (on Elvis's ample

girl: it is "as though he has swallowed a watermelon"). The musical judgments, too, are basically sound: Goldman is surely right to prefer Presley's early songs to his late, even if he carries this preference to extremes (he finds everything after Elvis's very first recordings in 1954 to be a falling off) and goes in for the fashionable post-modernist principle which decrees that the more parodistic a work of art is, the better (the early Presley, we're told, is "a marvellous mimic", is "essentially playful and parodistic", like "caricature", "fantasy", "surrealism" and "burlesque"). All in all, it's a strong narrative and lively performance.

Music, however, soon interested him less than films. "Frankie" to emulate the recently dead James Dean (or "Jimmy Dean" as Goldman insists on calling him), he was contracted to make a series of films and was rapidly "reduced to one of the ugliest and most repulsive presences on the American screen". Ruined by houses and commercialism, Elvis suffered two further blows in the late-1950s: his conscription into the army (presented here as a ploy by Colonel Parker to endear him to the respectable and middle aged) and the death of his mother in 1959 (Elvis is seen clawing desperately to join her in the coffin). Now his private life began to degenerate: a "nervy", "orgiastic", "masturbatory" and "voyeur", he pursued a deeply infantile sex life, full of "pajama parties" and peeping fantasies with young girls. Presley, whom he lived with for several years before marrying, eventually divorced him and he toyed with the idea of having her lover assassinated. Publicly too, Elvis declined: as Goldman sees it, apart from a brief revival round the time of his Las Vegas comeback in 1969, the 1960s and 1970s were downhill all the way.

In his haste to attack Presley from all possible angles, Goldman seems occasionally to contradict himself. Elvis, we learn, is a "supreme narcissist" but is also "resolutely self-hating and self-castigating" and has a "great longing to have done with this terribly embarrassing subject of his". Or he is described in January 1955 as "puritanical" and "upright about girls" but by May of the same year has commonly "three or four girls in his room at once" and "might resort to force" and "rape". Then again, it is hard to reconcile his "megalomania" (he is "a man who ruled by fear and intimidation") with passages that present him as the helpless pawn of the capital-crazed Colonel Parker. But Goldman carries all before him by virtue of the convenient dualism which poses the existence in Presley of two sharply opposed selves: a theory Goldman buttresses by making much of the fact that Elvis had a twin brother who died at birth ("he had beside him a phantom double, a secret sharer").

Goldman's justification for his hostile treatment of Elvis is the existence of what he calls "the Presley myth". The phrase turns up on many occasions in the book and each time drives him to a kind of fury. Believing that there are still millions of fog-bound innocents who "can't see for the myth, he conceives of himself as a truth-bearer who must 'break the spell' of gullibility and misinformation. But the Presley myth is itself a myth, a licence for Goldman to be as scurrilous as he likes. There has, after all, been no shortage of gossip and slander about Presley over the last five years. Fifteen days before he died, three bodyguards who had recently been sacked by Presley settled the score by telling of "the other side" of his life: their book, *Elvis: What Happened*, which upset Presley and some say contributed to the depression which led to his death, is one. Goldman draws on heavily, though without acknowledging its partiality. And though many of the other books

Elvis Presley: (top) the first ever photograph, reproduced in the book here reviewed; (middle) at twenty-one and on the brink of fame, and (bottom) what happened - both photographs reproduced in *Elvis: What Happened?* by Red West, Sonny West, Dave Heller, as told to Steve Dunleavy (332pp. Ballantine, 90p. 0 345 27433 4).

What is it, then, that makes Elvis so offensive? In large part it is the graphic portrait of Presley's last years with which Goldman begins. Confined to the plush padded cell that is his bedroom ("the Cave of Morphia" as the author calls it), Elvis lies gorging himself with huge meals of bacon, sauerkraut, even mash, imbibing vast quantities of drugs and entertaining himself with porno films. Lonely and lethargic, he rarely gives live performances any more and when he does has to be braced and bound so that his mighty paunch can be concealed. Goldman's picture reminds one of lines from early Presley songs - "I can't seem to stand on my own two feet", "All I could do was stand paralyzed" - lies supposedly testifying to the power of love but also having an ironic appositeness to his late decline.

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LAI

## No Dice

The seasons break and change. We stay the same.  
The flat is sunny, the flat is grey  
We waste the days, the same dark way

Suffering without grace or shame.  
The flowers are out, the flowers are gone  
We still go saying on and on

What at all times of year we say  
'Who can help anyone?' 'Damn you' 'Go away'  
The lines are too flat for a play

But something in us will not let us end  
What are we that we do not care  
What hopes are lost, who lives or dies?

Something in us glows from all the lies  
Something in us plumps on the despair.

Andrew Harvey



have been eulogistic (*Elvis, We Love You Tender* and *Elvis, Portrait of a Friend*) or downright cranky (Hans Holzer's *Presley Speaks* sets out to prove the King's continued existence in "the world beyond"), more than enough has appeared about the "other side" which Goldman claims to be the first to reveal. Even *Elvis - The Movie*, which draws a veil over the last years, showed many of the strains in Presley's relationships with his wife and entourage. One would have had to be living in a very remote part of the globe not to have got the message that Elvis's life was not what it seemed.

Yet Goldman is right in supposing that, familiar though we are with the excesses of rock musicians and singers (to the point indeed where it is the "straights" like Cliff Richard who seem the oddballs), the case of Elvis Presley nonetheless has a special fascination. There can be few more extraordinary incidents, for example, than that which took place on December 21, 1970, when Presley sought and was granted a meeting with the then American President, Richard Nixon, in order to volunteer to become a fully-fledged federal narcotics agent. Goldman, as usual, misses the point: he gloms over Elvis's deceit and hypocrisy, over how, railing against drugs, immoral-

ity and communists, he delivered an "inspiring speech marred only by his incessant scratching and rubbing of his drug-inflamed face and neck" (how, incidentally, since it was a private meeting, can Goldman know this?). But there is no reason to suppose that Presley did not mean all he said about dealers, pushers, junkies and hippies and how they were ruining America. His hope was that by going to the highest office of the land he might be given the chance to reverse history and to create again the settled world of the 1950s in which he had prospered.

For Presley's tragedy was to become too closely identified with the decade in which his career began. The image he created for himself in the 1950s was broader and more astute than might be supposed. His pelvis-grating, knee-shaking act evoked an energy and both social and sexual implications (the old order was going, the new promiscuity had arrived). But though Elvis enjoyed teasing and provoking on stage, he was upset at being called "obscene" and was careful not to push his act too far. He might be aggressive, threatening unspecified reprisals should anyone step on his blue suede shoes or try to take his girl ("You better not mess with the

US Male my friend"), but he also wanted to be thought of as sad and sensitive, a man who lived down the end of Lonely Street, who might be caught crying in the chapel, and who could suddenly pause (to a crooning background accompaniment) start talking straight from the heart. Remarkably, he succeeded in bringing this combination off: the rebel, the hedonist, the self-made man, the big spender, the sensitive plant, the whimpering cuckold, the teddybear who is cuddly and twee but who also (as the screaming fans acknowledged) gets taken to bed. Presley's version of the song "It's Now or Never" catches the tension nicely: the yawn of sexual passion ("My love can't wait") is muted by the languor and melodiousness of the singing voice.

With the coming of the 1960s Presley found it impossible to keep these various tensions in play. In private and in practice he subscribed to many of the values of the counter-culture: he bought a ranch to set up a commune; took drugs; became a devotee of occult religions; and having Priscilla to live with him, avoided as long as possible a conventional marriage and family ("Look at the typical American family scene", he railed, "Man walkin' around fartin'.

Women walkin' around scratchin'. Kids goin' around hollerin'. Hey, man, fuck that! I never did fit in that scene and I never will.") But his public image had become that of someone who, after a brief period of adolescent prick-kicking, had reconciled himself to the values of middle America. He let it be known that he detested the Beatles (though when he met them in secret he liked them), marijuana, political activism and all the other appendages of Alternativism. His songs, schmaltzy and sentimental, were now aimed at an older audience and he no longer gave live performances. In a decade dominated by groups rather than solo artists, he began to seem an anachronism: many of us who came late to him could not see what all the fuss had been about and put him in the same league of tediousness as Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra. Going to see Nixon in 1970 to become a narc was not for Elvis a piece of hypocrisy, then, but the logical solution to his dilemma: it was to be his revenge on those who had put him on the rubbish-heap of history.

Goldman cannot see this because he is too caught up in the Myth he wants to destroy. Instead he ventures that Elvis's problem was his "total incapacity to deal with reality". But

when have we ever expected musicians and singers to have a capacity for that? Behind this book lies the assumption that by showing Elvis's grasp on reality to be unsound, and his life to be shabby, one will also be showing him to have been less of a singer; Goldman is appalled at the evidence of Presley's "mounting" over greater peaks of popularity and power, while the man who was the object of all this adulation was steadily declining to the condition of a hapless wreck. But there is nothing surprising about this: Presley's records exist in a sphere untouched by the messes and vicissitudes of private life. Knowing about his love of guns or predilection for white pants cannot alter in the least the sound of "Heartbreak Hotel", "Blue Suede Shoes", "Hound Dog", "Hush House Rock" and the rest, nor the desire of people to hear them. Elvis's place in musical history is questionable: he wrote no songs and played the guitar badly; other of his contemporaries have finer voices and recorded better versions of his hits. Harsh things might be said, then, but Goldman vents his spleen in the wrong place, on the suffering man rather than on the artist, and at the end of his book Elvis Presley's reputation is as secure as ever.

## Expressing suppression Signalling surrender

By Garry O'Connor

KENNETH BARROW:

*Flora*  
An appreciation of the life and work of Dame Flora Robson  
242pp. Heinemann. £12.50.  
0 434 04775 9

Flora Robson, at five feet eight and a half, was unusually tall for an actress. Tentative rather than bold, of uneven features, she lacked social grace and dressed in a homely style. Her brother, David, repeatedly told her she was ugly. But her childhood, first in South Shields, later in Palmers Green, London, was happy, while her father, a sea-going Second Engineer, encouraged her to take lessons in singing, ballet and piano, as well as elocution, and taught her, according to Kenneth Barrow, "the importance of success".

Later, stimulated by her father's ambition for her to become the next Ellen Terry, Flora Robson went to RADA. She was bitterly disappointed to win only the bronze medal. Her career began indecisively and soon ground to a halt. She became welfare officer at the Welwyn Garden City, where she brooded on the emptiness of her life.

On coming back to the stage as the step-daughter in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, she met up with Tyrone Guthrie, whom she'd known before and once visited on his estate near Monaghan. While they were in a production together, Guthrie proposed to her after a row, and Flora readily mentioned she'd like a family, lots of children and to retire from the stage to bring them up. Guthrie quietly let the engagement drop. He didn't see children in his firmament, or other stars for that matter. He married his cousin instead.

Rather quickly, Flora became famous. Her first big success was as Mary Paterson in James Bridle's *The Apologists*. Thoughts of marriage were left behind as she took to heart the advice of her fellow actor in that production, Carleton Hobbs: "You are wicked not to be happy and grateful when you have found fame at last." Soon she was to play Eva in *Mughams* and *For Services Rendered* which emerged as the archetypal "Flora Robson" part of a woman approaching forty, plump, unmarried, subject - after disappointment, in love - to hysterical grief, then insanity. Flora came to epitomize a whole generation of superfluous women who, because of the dead in the First World War, had lost hope of marriage. But she branched out into other roles and marriages, sometimes

combining the two, and, later, into wonderful old ladies.

By now any gleam of unknown but intrinsic possibility in the story vanishes as the press cuttings book and Kenneth Barrow's indiscriminate servings from it get fatter. We drown in citations, sometimes six or seven to a page, about Flora's artistic brilliance. Some are not bad: "it was the voice that Garbo lacked" (Helen Hayes). Others are tiresome - "That is a *STARI!*" (Michael Redgrave). As a whole they blur rather than clarify her actual quality.

It's something of a surprise to find that this is a second "authorized" book about Flora Robson. The first, by Janet Dunbar, was published in 1960. Stage artists' early days often supply backgrounds more colourful than do Hollywood or Shaftesbury Avenue. Ben Green's touring company, The Cambridge Festival Theatre, the Oxford Repertory, 1924, all of these are described in clearer detail by Dunbar, presumably because in Dame Flora's memory of 1960 they were fresher. Shaw came to a performance at Oxford of *Heartbreak House*, in which she played Nurse Guinevere. According to Dunbar, "He went on to the stage, and said he was very reluctant to make a speech because he had thought the production was terrible... none of the actors near the characters... Very soon they were repeating his [Shaw's] insults as if they had been compliments." Barrow's account, by seeking both to excuse the performance and to avoid stating Shaw's actual response, becomes a muddle.

Printed in disconcerting italics at intervals in the new book are many of Dame Flora's own recent recollections. These suggest a modesty and an engaging plainness which if they do not by themselves generate great interest, at least spare one temporarily the endless drumbeat of newspaper cuttings. Barrow goes so far as to suggest that it was Kenneth Tynan - nowhere quoted but "whose antipathy to Flora had been obvious for several years" who killed off her career in the 1960s. But while she wasn't asked to play at the National Theatre, neither is there evidence to suggest she was asked much by Tynan or by anyone else. The career since then has been slight. "Most Beautiful Evenings," Barrow heads this chapter. Dame Flora retired in 1970 and will be eighty next March. It might have been worthwhile to explore more this enforced early retreat, for others of Dame Flora's vintage went on working well beyond 1970, and still continue. Not only for the personal reasons of which no attempt is allowed, but for the wider cause of changing fashion. Dame Flora's understanding impersonations of tortured spinsters no longer fitted. Anger and explicitness were in. Suppression of any kind was out. So were beautiful warm voices.

By Phyllis Grosskurth

MICHELLE SARDE:

*Colette*  
Free and Fettered  
Translated by Richard Miller  
479pp. Michael Joseph. £12.95.  
0 7181 2058 2

In this highly rhapsodic biography, Michèle Sarde seems intent on emphasizing Colette's vital, earthy quality as the essential woman. Her stability is attributed to her provincial mother, with her comforting, fiercely loving nature.

She was to provide her daughter with the model of a woman proud to be a woman, a woman who loved others because she had begun by loving herself. No man's gift. The gift of equilibrium, of solidity, of "normality" in the least conformist, least strict sense, a gift always suspect to those fascinated by the lower depths, by spiritual and mental imbalance.

"A woman proud to be a woman" - it sounds splendid, but does it actually conform to the facts of Colette's life? Marriage seemed the only honorable fate for a girl, and at sixteen Sidoine Gabrielle Colette was married off to Henri Gautier-Villars - "Willy" - some thirteen years her senior, already the father of an illegitimate child, a man of sundry affairs, financial and amatory. The facts seem to suggest that Colette's mother, turning a blind eye to his peccadilloes, leapt at the chance to marry her daughter off to a well-known Paris music critic.

How much she knew about the egregious Willy's stable of backs who turned out novels for him by the piece is impossible to know. Ms Sarde maintains that Colette hid from Sido the extraordinary story of her own initiation into novel-writing. Willy suggested that she write down her recollections of her school days, at first rejected them, and later recognized their financial potential if a *souvenir* of salaciousness was added - by himself. He then published them under his own name.

He turned Colette into a slavey, shutting her in a room to turn out so many pages a day of Claudine's adventures. What is astounding is Colette's compliance. Her youth, inexperience and dependence might be pleaded in extenuation, but as the years rolled by she allowed herself to be paraded around Paris as a twin to Follaire, the actress who played the stage Claudine and who was probably among Willy's string of mistresses.

Willy finally threw Colette out for an even younger woman, and she found herself in the ignominious position of discarded wife in a ground-floor flat. But it was this period of Colette's life when, embittered by the perfidy of

men, she turned to women for solace, that Ms Tarde clearly thinks was the most fulfilling. In the relaxed atmosphere of the *Belle Époque* Sapphism flourished. Men regarded it with amusement or tolerance, possibly an exciting little sexual vice from which they could profit. But according to Ms Sarde, women who preferred women became ultra-feminine:

Only another woman can restore the verdant paradise represented by the mother's body. To Colette - and particularly during this period - the male represented otherness, separation, jealousy, suffering, slavery, emotional alienation; the female was relationship, contact, fidelity, independence, emotional harmony.

Possibly, but while Colette seems to have been truly pan-sexual, above all she needed a protector in the old-fashioned, bourgeois way of which her mother would have approved. Henri de Jouvenel had a title, a position as editor-in-chief of *Le Matin*, and was willing to marry her. Again she allowed herself to slip into subservience, tolerating her husband's flagrant infidelities. Ms Sarde treats the birth of her daughter as something of an irrelevance.

## Rural unrealities

By Kim Taplin

HAROLD GASTER:

*A Morning Without Clouds*  
144pp. Cape. £5.50.  
0 224 01964 3

The cloudless morning is Harold Gaster's Sussex childhood, seventy years ago. This miscellany of reminiscences and opinions, connected only by the author's largely undifferentiated emotion concerning "the passing of that old rural life", is another moral: to appease the current appetite for books about the countryside.

There are a number of objections to be raised to the present volume. First, the naivety of the small boy who watched volunteers drilling on the green and "was never quite sure whether it was a show or what it was" is still too evident. Even straightforward autobiography could hardly ignore the implications of the clouds that were gathering. Second, rural labour idealized. As Orwell pointed out, at that period "most middle-class boys grew up within sight of a farm, and naturally it was the picturesque side of farm life that appealed to them." Unless he is likely to do it himself, a boy is not likely to notice the horrible drudgery.

Gaster commends Hardy to our attention. Readers of Hardy will be aware that Gaster's liberty is never justified.

vance, and indeed that is how Colette seemed to regard her.

Colette's own behaviour was irresponsible, for example in her liaison with de Jouvenel's son and in her later liaison with the much younger Maurice Gondek who, much to her relief, finally agreed to marry her. She always took it for granted that she would have to work hard, whether as a writer or an actress or a journalist, but she seemed to lack any real practical acumen to look after herself. She emerged broke from each of her marriages and could never save any money. Her venture into a beauty clinic in her later years was a disaster. But she was a *débrouillarde*, and she was fortunate to have a genuine gift for writing.

Emotionally, she drifted with the tide. Like all her heroines she swooned into love. Her life was a pattern of subject surrender to the men she loved. She had charm and the know-how to exert it, but this is something far different from the independent character with which her biographer tries to invest her. Ms Tarde struggles hard in her efforts to portray Colette as a feminist, but the real Colette manages to elude her.

morning was Hardy's afternoon and may make unfavourable comparisons to the Tessa's grim toil on the threshing machine and the idyllic account of the country here, where the labourers seem to be engaged in a pageant for the young gentleman's pleasure, rather than working. Hardy knew that rural life was Flintcomb-Ash as well as Talbothays. Third, Gaster is so carried away by the notion that he is recording what many of us never saw that he writes, as if for Martians, describing bulrushes in the same nostalgic terms as obsolete household utensils.

Gaster hopes to pre-empt criticism of his style by stressing that, as a painter, he is not equipped to construct a story or plot. Concerned to celebrate craftsmanship, he slight the craft of writing by ignoring its rudimentary skills, failing to look closely enough at his subject to avoid cliché, repeating himself (a primrose is described almost identically three times within a few pages), creating no kind of shape.

"May I not speak of mysticism and symbolism?" asks Gaster out of the blue. The author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, in common with much modern, here that one had much better not. And "symbolism", which needs pretty sharp definition, gets none. To appreciate Tynan's is not to be licensed to write; Gaster makes bold with both Tynan and the book of Samuel as epigraphs to these "notes and sketches"; and I'm afraid the liberty is never justified.

## AMERICAN POETRY

## In the line of the image

By Helen McNeil

JOHN BENSKO:

*Green Soldiers*  
80pp. Yale University Press. £6.95 (paperback, £3.45).  
0 300 02644 7

SUSAN STEWART:

*Yellow Stars and Ice*  
79pp. Princeton University Press. £5 (paperback, £1.50).  
0 691 06468 7

J. D. McCLATCHY:

*Scenes from Another Life*  
63pp. George Braziller. £4.95.  
0 8076 1000 3

DOUGLAS CRASE:

*The Revisionist*

83pp. Little, Brown. \$10.95.  
0 316 16062 8

GILBERT SORRENTINO:

*Selected Poems 1958-1980*  
268pp. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press. \$7.50.  
0 87685 501 X

These five collections show the extent to which American poetry is still reckoning with the consequences of the decision Ezra Pound made back in 1913. Pound declared that the best way for an American to write poetry in English was to concentrate on the image, to abjure symbolism, and let rhetoric and form follow after.

Although Wallace Stevens, T. S. Eliot and Robert Frost found other ways, Pound's solution was to prove the most easily digestible. If Robert Lowell holds little interest for younger American poets, it is not because of Lowell's effort to connect personal and public history, but because of the mimetic model he used for his diction after *Life Studies*. Today the mainstream is elsewhere, in the post-Poundian line of the image, which has provided American poetry with its short to middle length poetry of quotidian sensibility since the 1950s.

Since the line of the image is not associated with any single contemporary master, and since it has absorbed apparently disparate aspects of the work of Pound and William Carlos Williams, Surrealism and French Symbolism, it influences American poetry by consensus. According to the poetry magazine *Field*, "a pre-occupation with the image has been one of the leading characteristics of contemporary poetry for at least twenty years". *Field*'s recent symposium on the image asked poets to answer fifteen questions, such as: "Do you use, in talking about poetry, your own or that of others, terms like 'Deep Image', 'surreal image' and the like?" One way or another, it is the tradition of the image which young American poets must accommodate or reject.

John Benasko, in *Green Soldiers*, seeks to combine sensibility, narrative, and history within the formal constraints of this tradition. Benasko's short, moving stories of departure, loss and death are told in a powerfully declarative present tense. "Young Woman at Amiens: 1914" follows the associative movement of the girl's mind while she gazes at an oak tree with "thousands of dark birds"; her soldier lover departs, fading into the last image she will have of him:

"This morning there is ice in all the trees. She looks again at the bridge, the soldiers.

Here is just a boy, a hand waving, a bright spoon going off in the distance. Many of Benasko's poems close with a sudden shift or reiteration of the image. In a thirty to forty-line poem these firm endings tend to shut down those associative processes which Benasko's narratives encourage.

"My Ear to the Chest of the World", the programmatic poem that begins Susan Stewart's *Yellow Stars and Ice*, describes the attainment of the poet listening to nature. When Stewart writes, "What a life my body will carry on without me!" she is referring to the world's body, not to a quality

in herself. The other poems in *Yellow Stars and Ice* preserve this vision, celebrating the "true miracle" of natural processes. In "How the River Climbed Into this Poem":

It is raining in great sobs and single tears and raining through the haze of tomorrow afternoon and the languorous pinnies of July. And then, as if a baton had been lifted and not at all like lightning or thunder, it stops as soon as it's begun. Occasionally, there is an over-enthusiastic celebrating of the ordinary: "This is as astonishing / as orange juice". And certain poems ask us to notice how effective they are: "The dead man stands behind you, terrified / by this poem"; "I step back suddenly . . . at the sight of this poem".

Stewart's small, traditional vocabulary of images gives her collection a cumulative lyricism greater than the impact of any single poem. Several of the finest pieces, "The Doves Are Swallowing Hard", "The Exact Middle of the Night" and "Four Questions Regarding the Dreams of Animals" - take specific instances of nature imagery and move from observation to dream and back again; the effect is of mesmeric serenity.

J. D. McClatchy's *Scenes from Another Life* has the perceptiveness, the prosodic range, and the syntactic sophistication of major poetry, though McClatchy's brilliant manoeuvres don't always bring his subjects to life, particularly in the weaker poems towards the end of the volume. An unreconstructed Stevensian, McClatchy grants the "other life" of imagination a reality

and validity of its own, while he acknowledges the mainstream by devoting a number of poems to transformations of the real. In "Feetish", which opens the collection, the symbolic object, or fetish, is itself the muse, a "figure" whose presence gives "the power to answer outcry with insight".

McClatchy addresses himself to one of the most intractable problems in recent poetry: how to achieve the breadth of connotative meaning possible to symbolism, without committing the poem to an ideology of transcendence. McClatchy is bent on reclaiming territory for symbolic metaphor. In the attempt to do this he often produces an over-elevated poetic diction: "The evening's turns and mordents", "the sky's lucid farewells", "fate's maternal fires", "humming forger / Of the literal abstract". In the triumphant "A Winter without Snow", however, McClatchy sets up a debate between the ghosts of Emerson and Stevens. The nineteenth century left New England "knock-deep in transcendental drifts"; now, in snowless New Haven, everyone proudly praises ordinariness:

Down here, the plain terrets of provision do. This picket snow-fence peeling, gritty. Holding nothing back, nothing in, nothing at all.

McClatchy remarks ironically that the current preference for the "raw material of everyday" in poetry makes today's palace of art look like a "pre-fab house", "way out on the Sun Belt". But McClatchy uses the analogy to take flight as the poet's ordinary house is transformed into "a world of possibilities".

So many of John Ashbery's

new poem called "If", then "we must live through it".

Warren began his career as the youngest member of the Fugitives, a disciple of John Crowe Ransom and Allen Tate. His early work was well-wrought, intellectually acute, witty and balanced. The technical virtuosity of such work was beyond reproach, although in retrospect it appears somewhat static and imitative. The best poetry of Warren's middle period was the verse play called *Brother to Dragons* (1953), which he has recently seen fit to revise. Here Warren's liking for narrative, previously confined to the novel, had the effect of releasing raw energy like adrenalin into the bloodstream of his poetry. However, it was not until Warren virtually abandoned novel-writing in the early 1970s that he was able to tap the same energy again. The poems that followed, though hardly unpolished

## Interiors

(Campbell College, Belfast)

The lives we never quite intend to lead are spent in rooms we long to call our own.

We are partners in a quiet corner of the grounds, learning how to be discreet, treating the exercise with diffidence. Always the silence brings us nearer home.

We isolate particulars, I know the hushed wind of your presence in the hall.

You listen for the chair's creak, the whisper of a turning page; the muted soundings

of a makeshift permanence. Tomorrow is as certain as bourgeois ritual.

a still life tinted green by summer rain - the view from any window is the same.

Ian Kendrick

idiosyncrasies crop up in Douglas Crase's *The Revisionist* that Crase's topographical, hortatory and even nationalist address to the reader comes as a sharp surprise. The powerful and witty title-poem addresses an America which Crase wants to "revise".

What I am after to remember is not what was. And what I am anxious to save is not the same. For in the moment I saw you, you were changed.

The tone of "The Revisionist" varies eccentrically but convincingly between ecological indictment, descriptive natural history, high-cultural whimsy, and the eroticism of Hart Crane's *The Bridge*: "I've wondered to find you waiting there tethered / and dreaming". In another long poem, "Six Places in New York State", Crase meditates upon landscape and character, shifting skilfully from philosophy to sensation to memory. Crase's poems take their strong visual sense from nineteenth and twentieth-century American art, with Jackson Pollock's "Blue Poles" seen as "seismic totems" of the continent. Crase's parodic homage to William Cullen Bryant (and to Ashbery) in "To a Watertower" makes another link between the topographical, the nationalist, and the aesthetic. Yet Crase is least convincing when he most resembles Ashbery. His fondness for first lines referring to "it" and "things" indicates an Ashbery-like fastidiousness about naming the object too soon. But the technique is over-used to the point of mannerism. Crase is the unusual case of a contemporary poet whose most public, expansive voice is his most authentic.

In Gilbert Sorrentino's 1971 novel

*Inaginative Qualities of Actual Things*, the appalling Lou and his wife are both bad poets who write remarkably like Robert Creeley, leaving lots of white space between their short lines and placing the word "love" in the last one to protect the poem from insincerity and over-intellectualism. Sorrentino remarks scathingly that Lou was

employing the theory that something that is rotten becomes less so if it is made formally repetitious; and also by polluting the cliché with the addition of out-of-place adjectives. This came from his misunderstanding of Lorea, and Lou was not alone in his ignorance. A National Book Award winner of recent times has achieved his reputation by consistently making himself into Lorca with a corncob.

In his *Selected Poems 1958-1980*, Sorrentino struggles to keep his distance from what he calls the "floating cliché" of the consensus tradition and seeks to preserve an avant-garde, bohemian stance against the corn-cobbing academic imitators of true art. But like Robert Bly, Louis Simpson, Robert Park or any number of mainstream poets whom he may be presumed to loathe, Sorrentino assumes an absolute validity for ordinary reality, arrogates special prerogatives to poets for being poets, and writes in a style which mingles allusions in foreign languages, imagery, and slang. Characteristically, the title of Sorrentino's "Twelve Etudes for Voice and Kazoo" seeks to impress its audience with both knowledge and disarming modesty. Sorrentino is merely disputing the modernist inheritance rather than creating one of his own.

the heart of things. He has added a clamorous urgency, an intensity occasioned by age, and a turn to what might be called autobiographical verse. The road was opened for him by Lowell, Snodgrass, and others, who made confessional poems respectable. Yet Warren has gone beyond confession, reaching through mere personal fact to impersonal truth; he has taken on the mantle of the very poet he turned his own life into an exemplar. The lyric "If" in these poems is simply man at his best: simple, learned, loving, and completely human. This man, faced with "the terror / Of knowledge" in the title poem, asks: "But what can you do?" Warren answers: "Perhaps pray to God for strength to face the verification / That you are simply a man, with a man's dead reckoning, nothing more."

A genuine humility informs these poems and saves them from pretentiousness. And Warren's predilection for grand philosophical speculation is held in check by the autobiographical mode, which insists that each poem be founded on an incident or place. Thus, having evoked his climb up a seawall beside the Mediterranean, the poet can get away with talk about "the agony of Time". We can absorb his question - "What lies in the turn of the season to fear?" in a poem called "Vermont Ballad: Change of Season" because he has rendered so concretely the transformations of autumn, the "fifal rain" which has wrought "new traceries". New quicks, new love-knots, down the pane". Indeed, the title poem, "Rumor Verified", is an ode to humility, a poignant confession of moral inadequacy.

In an exact and haunting lyric "What Voice at Moth-Hour", Warren asks:

What voice did I hear as I wandered In a premature night of cedar, beech, oak. Each foot set soft, then still as stone (Standing to wait while the first owl spoke?)

Stricken with knowledge and the burden of history, Warren is besieged by voices that demand his attention and ours as well.



# Importing a modern tradition

By Fleur Adcock

JOHN FORBES:  
Stalin's Holidays  
51pp. Glebe, New South Wales:  
Transit Poetry.  
0 959437 0 3

DAVID MALOUF:  
First Things Last  
58pp. Chatto and Windus. £4.75.  
0 7011 2562 4

GRACE PERRY:  
Snow in Summer  
80pp. Berrima, New South Wales:  
Scribner Press.  
0 909185 0 2

R. F. BRISSENDEN:  
The Whale in Darkness  
71pp. European. £6.95.  
0 7081 1083 5

WILLIAM GRONO and  
NICOLAS HASLUCK:  
On the Edge  
77pp. Claremont, Western Australia:  
Freshwater Bay Press.  
0 906215 0 1 0

Australian poetry has been visibly on the move since 1968, when a group of young writers responded to the events of that year by initiating a rebellion against the poetic establishment. Like many revolutionaries they were armed with imported weapons: their anger and idealism were expressed in styles borrowed from older American contemporaries such as Ginsberg, Snyder, Ashbery and Frank O'Hara. Australian poetry needed to be shaken up, and no doubt this was as good a way as any of setting in motion a process which is still taking place: the country's literary magazines crackle with acrimony and dissent, as the proponents of the "New Poetry" subdivide into warring factions and are accused by more conservative writers of being not so much "modern" as merely the victims of another kind of colonialism.

But it is not only the "Generation of '68", in their by now rather faded uniform of ampersands, oblique strokes and lower case, who have learned from the Americans. An American flavour pervades a much wider area of Australian poetry, with even the "traditionalists" now tending to be traditional in ways derived from American models. The results

vary according to the originality and flexibility of the individual poets; the range of styles is considerable.

John Forbes, born in 1950, belongs to the extreme "avant-garde" end of the spectrum. He writes with a wild eclectic energy, his ideas and images jumping explosively in all directions. The effect can be exhausting, propelling the reader breathlessly forward with no time to notice anything but the immediate scenery (which tends to be Australian, populated and urban when it isn't merely a surrealistic blur). The few poems which stand still long enough to have subjects include one on the once-fashionable topic of drugs, which reads however like an amusing and relatively detached faraway to them, and several reflections on art and poetry: "Everything depends on the context" / I consoled the revolutionary / dying behind / the red wheelbarrow section / of our barricade.

Forbes makes few concessions to his readers; many of his poems are nonsense until one reads them a second or a third time; some remain nonsense. Not a great deal of this clever, frothy, iridescent stuff justifies the effort required to extract meaning from it, but every now and then a touch of grace or brilliance makes it seem briefly worthwhile.

David Malouf is a more mature poet, and a more accessible one; his long looping sentences twining over their line-endings need to be followed carefully, but he is no exhibitionist: the techniques he has learnt are subordinated to the poems themselves. He has a strong visual consciousness with a sense of joyful absorption in the natural world which makes the overworked word "celebration" irresistible. The first poem in this collection is about lemon trees gone wild, and the second about a garden: the image of Eden recurs throughout the book, as garden or as wilderness or as landscape remembered from the past (in a fine long poem, "Deception Bay", he reconstructs the surroundings of his childhood by a series of conscious acts of will shared with his readers).

The Paradise-garden theme is carried through into his poems about music. "An die Musik" begins "We might have known it always: music is the landscape we move through in our dreams . . ." and notes on a stove become growing plants. "So then, play your beanfield / Vivaldi's Gloria and see the thin pods swell, miraculous and many / as the mouths

of Hosannah." The whole poem is rich in such transformations: " . . . and passion-flowers / incline their busy flywheels to the sun, spinning a line of melody that modulates from yellow to green as in mirror fugues and counter-clockwise through the year."

One of Malouf's concerns is with the relations between reality and seeming: "Across the lake the small houses appear / to be real, or to imagine themselves somehow / painted on the view and leaning towards / their shaky selves in water . . ." Another preoccupation is time, the interfusion of the present and the past. In an elegy for his father he writes of the dead being buried in the living and looking out through their eyes, as do the yet-born. The concept occurs again in "Deception Bay": "Innocence / we call it, condescending / as so often to our forebears, / whose eyes look too clearly / through us to what lies / ahead." Then there is his reiterated use of the word "blue", not only for sky and sea and shadows on the land but as a personal symbol, almost a verbal tic. It is the indigo of the crabs "blue, majestic" - he lovingly pursues in "The Crab Feast", in order to eat them, incorporate them and become one with them. The process of achieving a symbiotic harmony with the natural world is also at the centre of his novel, *An Imaginary Life*, which like many of these poems looks back to a prelapsarian mode of existence.

Malouf's powerful imagination allows a certain amount of surrealism, without too much self-indulgence. He uses a variety of fairly free verse forms, including prose poetry, while retaining a commitment to normal syntax. He can be playful, and his obsession with the visual sometimes carries him away into digressions, but he is a serious poet concerned with serious things.

The blurb of Grace Perry's book states that she was the first among her generation of Australian poets (she was born in 1927) to "open up her writing to an international style" and her use of the deep image is admirably mentioned. The result is a self-absorbed, baroque monologue addressed to a nameless "you" and filled with images of fire, flame, winter, gardens, sea, river, rocks, birds, bone and skin. There are no place-names, no titles, no punctuation (and no humour), but the work is divided into separate short instalments, each alone on its page with a lot of clean white space. Much of the

content is erotic: "you are the unciphered obelisk / guarding the entry / the temple pillar / that holds the walls apart / the dome / distending the dark vault." The blurb's note that "it has been a threat of . . . her own death that has given this love its new life" inhibits further comment.

R. F. Brissenden is of the same generation, but has remained untouched by new influences from abroad. His present collection includes a sestina, no more interesting than most examples of this tedious form, and several sonnets (*Skeches from Herodotus*, retold in not particularly distinguished verse). He has a number of poems on classical themes, competently done but rather too smooth and well-mannered apart from an occasional false note - "Medea, in an updating of Ovid, muses 'Daddy is impossible!' Brissenden's zoological pieces, about a toad, snails and protozoa, are more appealing, but his whale poem dragged in the classics again, with Arius summoned on his dolphin for the final effect. Then there are elegies, poems for friends, childhood reminiscences, and a sequence of travel-notes about Indonesia; these are in a more relaxed style, and succeed in their presentation of scenes and people, although there's perhaps too much wonderment at the paradoxicality of it all.

Overall one has the impression of a man who enjoys writing poetry and has acquired many of the necessary skills; but a certain urgency is lacking, and the urbane technique is not quite polished enough.

William Grono and Nicholas Hasluck share a volume, padded out with illustrations. Hasluck goes in for sequences about places: Rottnest Island, with holiday-makers; a satirically-imagined Sydney; nineteenth-century Cornwall, where the speaker contemplates joining his brother on the Australian goldfields. The descriptions are adequate in their quiet way, but Hasluck's talent seems more suited to fiction, which he also writes, than verse. One poem which works is "Islands", about non-existent spots of land which have found their way on to maps: "Voyages of discovery, deep / into the charmed wastes, / were then required / to move them off."

Grono too achieves a successful poem, in "Separation", and a few near-misses. For the most part, though, his tone is uncertain, veering from the sentimental to the facetious, and his examinations of Australian cultural assumptions limp slightly. These two poets, both from Western Australia, seem peacefully indifferent to questions of style.

In 1917 Robert Graves wrote to Wilfred Owen: "For God's sake cheer up and write more optimistically - the war's not ended yet but a poet should have a spirit above wars." This is reported in *The English Poets of the First World War* as a suggestion that Owen "should sometimes write more cheerful poems". The blandness of style and the emasculation of a complex point are typical of John Lehmann's book. It persistently retreats from criticism into chat ("Sometimes a note of deep sadness appears to modify the bitterness" of Sassoon's poems), firing off a few did facts as it goes. (Edward Thomas did write poetry at the Front; only once, but in an introductory survey of this sort accuracy is the least one can ask.)

Apart from simply recalling the main figures and their achievements, Lehmann only discusses three general matters of much interest. The first is well known and well documented. First World War poetry falls roughly into two kinds: the gleeful and jingoistic patriotism exemplified by Rupert Brooke gave way after the Somme to the warnings and passionate chastisements of Sassoon, Owen and Rosenberg. The other two themes are less often discussed even now, and until Paul Fussell published *The Great War and Modern Memory* in 1975 were almost completely ignored. One is how a number of poems written early as well as late in the war are profoundly literary in their inspiration and reference. Owen, in particular, seems to steady himself in his titles and opening lines by glancing at another writer - at Shelley, for instance, in "Strange Meeting", or Swinburne in "Greater Love". His purpose is not so much confidence-giving, as to show that the war, specific but submerged reminders of the pastoral tradition are often poignantly introduced into a context of barbarous ugliness. While people behave inhumanly, the poems argue, nature is unnatural.

Red lips are not so red. At the staped stones, kissed by the English dead. Kindness of wood and wood. Seems shame to their love, pure.

Overall one has the impression of a man who enjoys writing poetry and has acquired many of the necessary skills; but a certain urgency is lacking, and the urbane technique is not quite polished enough.

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## A spirit above wars

By Andrew Motion

JOHN LEHMANN:  
*The English Poets of the First World War*  
144pp. 58 illustrations. Thames and Hudson. £6.95.  
0 500 01256 3

O love, your eyes lose lure  
When I behold eyes blinded in my head.

"Greater Love" also illustrates the second of Lehmann's points that derive from Fussell: "the peculiar conditions of front-line warfare, when danger of death and mutilation are ever present, inevitably intensified camaraderie into something deeper and more emotional: the beautiful young man dying in the arms of his fellow soldier or officer could hardly fail to arouse feelings very close to love." It is undeniably true that much of the best work by Sassoon, Owen and Ivor Gurney - for instance - is characterized by a strong homo-erotic element. But it is a consideration which needs extremely careful treatment if its effect is to be accurately gauged. For all its intensity, the homo-eroticism of something like Owen's fragment "I saw his round mouth's crimson deepen as it fell", or Gurney's wonderful lyric "To His Love", is extraordinarily restrained and utterly unselfconscious.

He's gone, and all our plans  
Are useless indeed.  
We'll walk no more on Cotswold  
Where the sheep feed  
Quietly and take no heed.

His body that was so quick  
Is not as you  
Knew it, on Severn river  
Under the blue  
Driving our small boat through  
Lehmann's rather unguarded handling of this theme means that he risks concerning his delicate and often cryptic intimacies. In doing so, he underestimates the subtlety with which it helps to answer Graves's appeal for "a spirit above wars". Its sorrowful and frustrated expressions of affection are widely and generally applicable, while at the same time evoking an actual and immediate context.

The revised 6th edition of *The Arts Council's Poetry Library's Short-Titled Catalogue*, compiled by Jonathan Barker with an introduction by Philip Larkin (152pp. Arts Council of Great Britain/Carnegie. £5.95 and £2.95 paperback. 0 85635 3949) lists alphabetically some 8,000 collections of poems by British poets; American poets' translations of foreign poets into English included in the Poetry Library at 9, Long Acre, London WC2; among them are included Diana Barnes's *The Book of Repulsive Women*, Ray Bradbury's *Where Robert Mice and Robert Men Run Round in Robot Towns*, Max Ernst's *Une Semaine de Bonté*, Norman Mailer's *Death for the Ladies*, Pablo Picasso's *Hunk of Skin*, and Raymond Radiguet's *Collected Poems*.

## Representing thought

By Colin McGinn

JERRY A. FODOR:  
*Representations: Philosophical Essays on the Foundations of Cognitive Science*  
343pp. Brighton: Harvester £22.50.  
0 85527 977 X

In *Mental Acts*, published in 1957, P. T. Geach proposed that judgment be understood in terms of "mental utterances" in an "interior language". Judging, he supposed, consists in the mind's exercise of concepts, and the content of a judgment comprises a complex of ideas which represent things in the world; his suggestion was that these ideas be identified with words - to judge that the sky is blue is to say in one's heart "the sky is blue". This theory, or something very like it, has recently been advocated by Jerry Fodor (among others) under the title "the language of thought", though Geach's early statement of the theory is not mentioned. In this new collection of essays, mostly reprints of earlier publications, Fodor's chief concern is to expound and defend what he calls the Representational Theory of the Mind (RTM). RTM, as Fodor expounds it, is the thesis that to have thoughts is to be related to internal formulae in a (probably innate and universal) language, these formulae having both syntactic and semantic properties; mental processes such as reasoning consist in computational operations performed upon these formulae.

Fodor holds that RTM is (a) a substantive and controversial thesis and (b) an empirical thesis, one whose acceptability must finally turn upon how successfully it serves the theoretical needs of the cognitive psychologist. But Fodor's way of presenting the issues is misleading. Surely everyone (except behaviourists and the confused) would agree that thinking involves the structured deployment of concepts, and that concepts are (or correspond to) mental elements which somehow represent the world? What is substantive and controversial is not RTM as such, but the linguistic turn Fodor gives to it. Fodor's presentation obscures this because he writes as if the choice were between accepting the language of thought and rejecting altogether the idea that thought involves the mental exercise of concepts. Geach's original explication of the philosophical thesis is from the contentious: he first introduced the idea of mental representation, leaving it open what the representations were to be, and only later proposed that words play the role of representing ideas. The real issue, then, is not whether RTM is true, but what sort of item a mental representation or concept is.

It is partly this conflation of issues which explains Fodor's insistence that RTM is an empirical thesis. For whereas it is arguable that the internal language theory is answerable to the theoretical requirements of empirical psychology, it is scarcely to be imagined that psychological experiments should induce us to abandon the philosophical thesis that thinking consists in the exercise of concepts. Fodor is well aware that he is reviving a philosophical account of thought at least as old as the works of Descartes and Locke, but he likes to suggest that nowadays the philosophers can and should hand over their problems to the scientists and await their verdict. But really it is not that RTM is philosophically respectable only so long as psychologists find it experimentally fruitful; rather, psychologists are obliged to conceive the mind in this way precisely because RTM is (or is not) acceptable on pre-theoretic or philosophical grounds. Contrary to what Fodor suggests, philosophy of mind is not in the process of being engulfed by "cognitive science".

The thesis that thinking is the internal manipulation of sentences invites the question: how these sentences acquire semantic significance - in virtue of what do they have a meaning for the thinker? Fodor asks this crucial question with notable caution, but his view seems to be that the internal sentences enjoy significance in virtue of two sorts of properties: syntactical or "formal" properties, which determine the role of a thought content in the thinker's mental life; and genuinely semantic properties - reference, satisfaction, truth - relating the internal words to the world. Anyone familiar with Frege's writings will wonder what has happened to the level of sense, i.e. the association of cognitively significant concepts with words considered as syntactic objects. What Fodor seems to want to suggest is that more syntax can discharge the duties of sense, that the "shape" of internal symbols can function as their cognitive meaning.

But once this suggestion is made explicit the idea looks hopeless - mere uninterpreted syntax has no representational significance; we need some apparatus which assigns concepts to the internal words or else they will be literally senseless. The relational semantic properties will not do the job since, as Fodor recognizes, they cannot account for the different ways in which the same object may be mentally represented (the "opacity" of thought contents). Nor is the idea that syntactic properties might do duty for sense just a detachable aberration; for once the need of sense is acknowledged the question becomes acute as to whether there remains any useful work for internal sentences to perform. If we require non-syntactic mental representations anyway, then why not make do with these and let

the internal words go? Of course we are then left with the real question - what a concept is. But the language of thought, so far from answering that question, conceals the need to ask it, while silently helping itself to resources whose characterization is the point at issue. Perhaps Fodor's proneness to suppose that syntax can add up to sense comes from the feeling that words in a mental medium, unlike spoken words, are somehow intrinsically interpreted - this along with undue concentration on the workings of computers.

RTM and the language of thought are not the only topics discussed in *Representations*; there is independently interesting material on functionalism, on realism about the mental, on reduction, artificial intelligence semantics, and the doctrine of innate ideas. Most of this seemed to me salutary and often stimulating - the mental is held to be real, irreducible to the physical, and more perplexing than some people suppose - but there are a number of shaky points, mainly concerning the relation between mental and physical, and the issues of innateness.

Fodor wishes to argue, reasonably enough, that the explanatory role of thought content is not preserved to mental neurophysiological reduction. His ostensible reason for this is that the "standard notion" of reduction permits the loss of structure in mental content. The argument is obscure, and the claim is so hedged that it often looks empty; at any rate, the alleged consequence of reduction seems easily circumvented simply by requiring that the predi-

cates in the reducing neurophysiological theory preserve the complexity of the predicates in the reduced psychological theory - a requirement one would think it natural to impose on the start. There is also what must be some sort of slip on Fodor's part about the distinction between identifying mental particulars with brain events (token identity) and identifying mental properties with brain properties (type identity). Fodor asserts, incorrectly, that the former identification relates only to *all actual* mental particulars, while the latter identifies *all possible* mental particulars with physical events. This is a mistake, since the latter identification does not entail that for any possible instance of a given mental property, the corresponding physical event is of the *same* physical type: every possible coloured object is identifiable with some object having a mass, but it does not follow that the property of being red is identifiable with the property of having a certain mass.

About the innateness of concepts Fodor makes a surprising claim: he suggests that, understood correctly, both empiricists and nativists agree that primitive concepts are unlearned and so innate; they disagree fundamentally only over which concepts are primitive, the empiricist finding conceptual complexity where the nativist desires simplicity. This latter point is interesting and probably right, but Fodor is surely in error in his claim that this is the only disagreement - in particular, in his claim that empiricists accept the induction seems easily circumvented simply by requiring that the predi-

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cautions, a principle to the effect that one should correlate sentences of the language under study with those of one's own language in such a way as to make the speakers of the language under study emerge to us as great an extent as possible, as saying what one takes to be true, or, failing that, what one would take it to be reasonable to say in their position.

It is the first of these suggestions concerning "truth conditions", that has captured the imagination of writers in the philosophy of language, but it is the second which Macdonald and Pettit rely on. It is a powerful assumption. Its scope is seen in two main conclusions, which they grandly call "methodological" humanism, and "ontological individualism". Their humanism claims that there is a standard (or "orthodox") as they call it) conception of an agent, which is a fixed point in our understanding of human beings and which cannot be displaced by (for example) the conception of people as neurological systems or as passive instances of large-scale historical or economic patterns. This clearly entails a bias towards explanations which focus on the motives and actions of individuals, related in a commonsensical way, and this bias is made explicit in their individualism. It is meant to be a middle-ground position: it claims neither that the concepts in terms of which we understand social institutions must be drawn just from those we use to understand individuals, nor that the principles we use have to be derived from principles about individual action. The claim is just that each such principle must be consistent with the assumption that social facts result from the addition and interaction of facts about individuals.

It is not hard to see in a general way how the assumptions they take over from Davidson lead to these conclusions. The conclusions are stated in rather subtle terms than those I have used to paraphrase them, though, and a number of interesting details emerge. There are worth mentioning here.

The first is an argument that, since the information provided by an explanation of a society is in accordance with the "orthodox" conception of individuals, the explanation consists not in any principles associated with that conception, but solely in the ascription to an agent of various

beliefs and desires, there is nothing in the orthodox conception of agency that could be refuted by further evidence or further scientific developments. The second is a claim that one could not accept a generalization about some social regularity unless one thought that it was a law of nature (and not simply an accidental series of coincidences), and that one would be unlikely to believe this unless one could see how the regularity might in principle be explained as resulting from the actions of individuals.

The third is an attempt to apply Davidson's principles to the interpretation of a culture's ethical principles. Macdonald and Pettit argue that one crucial determinant of whether one ascribes any objective truth or falsity to the values of another culture (in comparison with one's own) is the extent to which one takes the ascription of a desire to someone as describing just the way that person feels. Their discussion is rather tentative and tangled at this point, as indeed it must be, but they do not seem to acknowledge that doubts about the interpretation of belief and desire somewhat undermine their basic Davidsonian premise. These three claims involve the authors in what seem to me to be the most interesting analyses in the book: the discussion at these points is heavily dependent, on "what" other philosophers have written, however, and their treatment of these authors is too quick to be satisfying, and too technical to be easily digested by the non-philosophers at whom the book is partly aimed.

Their main claim remains very controversial. There may be a single discipline which can serve as a map through the human sciences, but Macdonald and Pettit have not yet established that there is, let alone that it is Davidsonian semantics. Most importantly, their basic idea, that the "orthodox" conception of agency can serve as a fixed constraint on theorizing about human beings, needs some further explanation. My uncertainties about it are of two kinds. First, it is not clear exactly what the orthodox conception is, and it is not clear what connections between beliefs, desires, and actions it allows as intelligible. Presumably the descriptions that historians normally give of the motives of historical figures are prime examples of it, as must be the models of decision-making found in microeconomics. But what is the general pattern that includes both of these? Is psychology a permissible depiction of human motives? How must macroeconomic models be tied to microeconomic studies? And even if we take the orthodox conception as understood, since it is clear enough what the authors mean to be included in it, uncertainties remain about the force of the constraint they intend to impose on our theorizing. Must all theorizing about people be consistent with it, or only that which we choose to include under the label "social science"? Are the parts of psychology and of economics that seem to ignore or even contradict it illegitimate, or simply not social sciences? This book is clearly flawed, in terms of both exposition and argument. It is clearly interesting, too; it makes one think of old problems in a new way. My suspicion is that the line of argument they are developing will eventually show a rather upside-down version of their conclusion: instead of resolving methodological problems in social science by confronting them with the intransigent example of semantics, we will find as we push ahead with the science of language that the familiar difficulties of a social science will appear there too and that there will be no easy way around them. This is not to say that there is no way around them, though; nor is it to deny that the way may be of very general application, as Macdonald and Pettit believe.

*Modern Philosophy: An Introduction* by A. R. Lewis, has just been published (246pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, £7.95, paperback, £3.95, 0 7100 0974 7). Written in an attractively straightforward style, it is designed to provide an introduction to the subject for "intending students, first-year undergraduates and interested laymen" and seeks to reveal "the close links between various branches of philosophy". Part One deals with particular topics, with chapters on free will, truth, value judgments, induction, law of nature, meaning, mind and body, scepticism and language, the basis of morals, and works of art. Part Two is more general, offering a survey of recent developments.

## Instant enlightenment

By Wendy Cope

JAMES KIRKUP:  
*Dongonban Messages*  
130pp. Kyoto Editions, Union Ser-Aces, PO Box 205, Osaka-Minami, Osaka 542-91, Japan. £2.

S. D. P. CLOUGH:  
*Home to the Haiku Masters*  
114pp. S. D. P. Clough, 14 St Ann's Road, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR1 3S.

The "dongonban" of James Kirkup's title is a green noticeboard found on Japanese railway stations on which travellers can write in chalk. Kirkup's "messages" are his one-line poems, the fruits of an interest in the form that was born when he first went to Japan and learned about *kata* and *manjo*, the comic sayings used in Zen Buddhist training.

Twenty years later his enthusiasm is such that he would like to see one-line poems not only on railway stations, but also in buses and trains, on bridges and T-shirts, thrown into the sea in bottles, tied to balloons, and even "cultivating our drab British landscape with these". This last suggestion could prove dangerous, if not that Kirkup says in his introduction

tion is true. "A one-line poem", he claims, "is instant enlightenment . . . it acts upon our system like a bolt from the blue or a brisk amphetamine injection". Most probably, the average British pedestrian would react with customary sang-froid to the worst that Kirkup has to offer - the macabre ("I sliced her bolted breasts, very finely"), the personal ("I can sit on my public hat"), the narrative ("The hippopotamus is having a heart attack"), the pretentious ("I am the wandering Jew of modern literature") and the feebly humorous ("I described my bowel movements on the turd programme").

Some of the better one-liners are lyrical - "Infinite shores of sounding gongs", a dead tree sobs in the striking metaphors - "night skyscrapers", "unsubdued, growword puzzles", "Others, content on, human life - 'stickiness in the summer vacation of the poet'".

Kirkup regards all the poems in *Dongonban Messages* as *haiku* or *senryu*, and reflects the view that they should necessarily contain seventeen syllables. Those that do are often twice as long as their counterparts in Japanese. S. D. P. Clough believes that "very short originals such as *haikai*" can

be considered as material for longer poems". His "linked" versions of Japanese *haikai* spell out and elaborate what the "masters" merely suggest, and rarely come anywhere near the effectiveness of the original. Basho's *haiku* "A banked fire: / on the garden wall / a visitor's shadow," for example, has inspired a poem which begins:

Contemplating  
the slow and elaborate  
death of coals  
I brood once more  
on the human dilemma.  
Is there any point  
any point at all  
in our ceaseless activity

*Home to the Haiku Masters* also includes versions of *tanka* and *Korean jijo* (traditional poems of three lines with fourteen to sixteen syllables in each) and translations of some fine prose passages by Basho, as well as poems that are entirely Clough's own.

There are impressive lines in some of these. Describing the appearance of snow on the Malvern hills for instance he writes

In one swift move,  
like a brilliant chess player,  
Winter has taken it all.

But other poems would benefit from ruthless pruning. Clough would do well to heed James Kirkup's assertion that "most normal poems contain too many words".







## Less than decisive

**By Brian Montgomery**

**JOHN STRAWSON:**  
El Alamein  
Desert Victory  
191pp. Dent. £8.95.  
0 460 04422 2

El Alamein has often been spoken of and written of as a decisive battle. . . . But it was not decisive. It was just a battle which the British won - itself a noteworthy event - with more than two-and-a-half years of battle to come. . . . So great was the material superiority enjoyed by the British that there was nothing remarkable about their having won the battle. What would have been out of the ordinary is if Montgomery had failed to win it.

Thus Major-General John Strawn, a distinguished cavalry officer and writer, in his latest book, in which he assesses the military leadership, on both sides, before and during the El Alamo battle in 1836, and that battle's place in military history. Readers, particularly those who served under Monty who had relatives in the 8th Army, I believe, be utterly astonished, and generally dismayed, by so many of the writer's vehement opinions, clearly visible in this short book. Nobody denies that Monty had his faults and failings, which undoubtedly brought him some implacable enemies and distressed some of his subordinates. But Strawn's strictures on the victor of Alamein are unique of their kind. So far no author has deflated Monty's performance and reputation in the whole field of tactical training and battle instruction. Alanbrooke in particular emphasized his expertise as a trainer and commander. Yet the author writes: "In

# Uniformly peculiar

**By Nicholas Best**

**BYRON FARWELL;**  
For Queen and Country  
A Social History of the Victorian  
and Edwardian Army  
256pp. Allen Lane. £8.50.  
0 7139 1241 3

After four years of sleeping with subordinates' wives in return for posting their husbands away from the front, Field Marshal Sir John French found time to look back at the First World War: "I cannot help wondering why none of us realized what the most modern rifle, the machine gun, motor traction, the aeroplane and wireless telegraphy would bring about. It seems so simple when judged by the results."

Exactly why British generals failed to spot the obvious is amply explained in Byron Farwell's social history of the army during the reigns of Victoria and Edward VII. Instead of war, he looks at the army in peace, at its character, its options, its prejudices and, way of life, at its methods of recruitment and training, both for officers and other ranks, and above all at its insularity at a time when Britain dominated forty per cent of the world's land mass. If much of it

much has been told before, there is much more to be said. The author's particular strength is as the author points out, when he writes of the Victorian army's customs and attitudes are very much different from those of the army of the future. The author's style is very much more lively today and, unfortunately, still so.

"The thing that astounds me most is the entire absence of the thinking faculty in nine out of ten of the higher-grade officers with whom I was associated," wrote General Sir William Birdwood in 1911. But if certain things have never changed in the British army, some of the more agreeable characteristics have stayed the same too. Close to the top of the booting list, the

Much in this book is repetition, but with greater emphasis, of the myth adopted by Roger Parkinson and other biographers of Auchinleck, that it was the latter who really defeated Rommel on the Alamein line in July 1942; and that Montgomery's plans for the defensive battle of Alam Halfa, and the final (encounter) battle of Alamein, were derived entirely from Auchinleck's ideas.

For military historians the interesting part of this book is probably the last chapter, in which the author analyses his question "as to whether or not Alamein was a decisive battle." "Alamein may have been a famous victory. . . But was it a decisive? . . . Was a stepping stone to victory . . . Compared with Sedan and Tannenberg it was puny. . . Its credit will ask: "Suppose. . . Roosevelt and Montgomery had won at Alamein. . . what then?" The answer is we should have lost the Middle East altogether. Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, with all the absolutely vital oil supplies from the Persian Gulf. Not a decisive battle for the Allies?

## Diluting the mixture

**Gutenberg-Jahrbuch 1980**  
379pp. Mainz: Gutenberg-Gesellschaft

Thus, the fifty-fifth issue of the  *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, marks to some extent the end of an era, for this is the last which will offer the long and familiar pot-pourri of contributions on bibliographical topics, some of major significance and general interest, others exotic or trivial. In his preface the editor, Hans-Joachim Koppitz, indicates that in future at least a quarter of the volume will be devoted to a specific theme. For 1981 this will be "Gutenberg's legacy today", and proposals for subsequent years include state printing and publishing houses, university presses, the history and development of law books, the printing and distribution of musical scores, and museums of printing and the history of the book. Furthermore, greater attention than hitherto will be accorded to contemporary technologies such as film setting, microprocessors, and microforms. These changes in editorial policy are very desirable, but at the same time it is gratifying that there are not being taken to an extreme. There will still be ample space for contributions of the type to which we have long been accustomed. This compromise solution will ensure the contents will not lack cohesion, as has occasionally been the case in the past.

It is to be assumed that the polyglot character of the *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* will be maintained, though – this year at least – the number of contributions in languages other than German is already much reduced. There are twenty-nine articles in German, twenty in Italian, five in French, compared with twenty in German, eleven in English, five in French, two in Italian, and one in Spanish in the 1979 volume. This variety of languages has doubtless helped the *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* to maintain its prominence in the field of bibliographical journalism and is something that should not be sacrificed. Bibliographers have recently come to realize that they have much to learn from the work of colleagues abroad, and the *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, imagined, and anything which fosters international interest in a journal.

to be welcomed. The international reputation of the *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* is manifest in the distinguished contributors it has always attracted and this volume is no exception, as are the names of Peter Amelung, Frederick C. Avis, Irmgard Bezze, Norman Blake, Ferdinand Geldner, Theo Gerardy, Albert Labarre, David Paisley, Dennis Rhodes, and Elisabeth Soltész (to mention but a few) amply show.

The *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* always contains something that will prove widely useful. This year, Helmut Urban and Claus W. Gerhardt survey recent work on printing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and in the twentieth century respectively. It would be a service if Professor Koppitz could ensure that the review offered regular (perhaps bilingual) review articles on work on fifteenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century printing too, as well as in other relevant fields such as illustration and binding. There are grounds

for optimism that this suggestion will be taken up, for Koppitz, in a contribution of his own, shows himself to be keenly concerned with the dissemination of information about the history of the book. In a short critique of the *AFHB* bibliography, *Die Bibliothek der Geschichte der Allgemeinen und Partikulären Bibliothekswissenschaften*, Koppitz draws attention to their several limitations: in the case of the *AFHB* both incomplete geographical coverage, and lack of attention to such important topics as codicology and studies of the reader, in the case of *WZB* concentration on Germany and, in the case of both publications, neglect of the contemporary situation. He emphasizes the need for a center to provide more comprehensive coverage of information on the

Vordersternann, on one printed by Johann Hämmer at Augsburg in the late 1580s, newly discovered in the Sprengel and Albert Labarre studies of catalogues published by the Dornir printer-buokseller Balhazar Heller in 1598 and 1603-1636. Of the tour essays on book-illustration, all of which are concerned with fifteenth or sixteenth-century woodcuts, that by Peter Amelung merits special mention, for through it deals specifically with an Augsburg almanach of 1496, it provides a succinct account of the various types of illustration found in almanachs and raises issues of more general application. Among the items on bindings, there are several of interest, including Konrad von Rabenau's piece on a binding executed in 1559 for Lucas Cranach the Younger (on part IV of Philipp Melancthon, *Declinationes*, Strasbourg: S. Emmel, 1558), and Renate Neumüller-Klauser's list of twenty-nine representations in art of so-called 'Taschbücher' (ie books so bound that they could be taken in a bag) which augments the catalogue (447 entries) published by Lisl and Hugo Alker in the *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* in 1978.

period, a subject with which he has dealt more exhaustively in his book *Studien zur Tradierung der weltlichen mittelhochdeutschen Epik im 15. und beginnenden 16. Jahrhunderten* (Munich 1980), and Irmgard Bezzel who compiled the monumental *Erasmus-Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts in bayerischen Bibliotheken* (Stuttgart 1979) draws attention to six books by Erasmus signed by the author for presentation to friends.

The majority of contributions naturally cater for rather specialized interests. A number are concerned with particular printers. Dennison Rhodes, for example, shows that Raphael Franciscus and Raphael Francus Florentinus are one and the same person. Bolz presents twelve unsigned sixteenth-century books now in Budapest to Johann Petreus of Nuremberg, and Mirjam Bohatková examines a collection of books, brochures and broadsheets now in Prague, printed by Johann Zittauer between 1609 and 1619. Otto Hürm dealing with a later period, discusses the ambivalent attitude of the typographer Rudolf von Larisch in the early years of this century to the use of the 'Gothic' and 'Fraktur' types. There are two essays on bookseller's catalogues: that by Jürgen

# With instru

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**By D. J. McKitterick**

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**FRANCESCO COLONNA:**  
Unconquerable Belshazz

**Hyperbomachia Poliphila**  
Introduction by Peter Dronke  
Zaragoza; Las Ediciones del Portico  
8 485264 371

The *Hypnerotomachia Poliphilli* is not a rare book even in the original edition printed by Aldus Manutius in 1499, and recently two new fascimiles have been published. George Painter's introduction to the loving reproduction of the work published by the Eugramia Press in 1963 remains a milestone in the study of the *Hypnerotomachia*. The justification for the latest fascimiles lies in Peter Dronke's introduction. Some of the enigmas that one

son della lingua, e il suo gusto, e il suo  
tutto si è circondato della più nobil  
lessi si autoprincipio - were disentan  
Maria Teresa Casella and Father  
Giovanni Pozzi in their joint work of  
Francesco Colonna published in 1953  
while Father Pozzi's and Lucia Cal  
poni's modern edition of 1964  
immeasurably advanced our understand  
standing of its text. And yet, as M  
Dronke points out, little seems to have  
been written on the genre, or on the  
literary influences which are apparent  
in the *Hyperatoma*, or on the  
form of the narrative itself. For this  
Colonna's love of linguistic curiosities  
his penchant for coloring portmanteau  
words, as well as his taste for the  
antique, have long been noticed, and  
the influence of *Alain de Lille* was  
demonstrated by Pozzi. Mr. Dronke

Vordersternann, on one printed by Johann Hämmer at Augsburg in the late 1580s, newly discovered in the Sprengel and Albert Labarre studies of catalogues published by the Dorn printer-buokseller Balhazar Heller in 1598 and 1603-1636. Of the tour essays on book-illustration, all of which are concerned with fifteenth or sixteenth-century woodcuts, that by Peter Amelung merits special mention, for through it deals specifically with an Augsburg almanach of 1496, it provides a succinct account of the various types of illustration found in almanachs and raises issues of more general application. Among the items on bindings, there are several of interest, including Konrad von Rabenau's piece on a binding executed in 1559 for Lucas Cranach the Younger (on part IV of Philipp Melancthon, *Declinationes*, Strasbourg: S. Emmel, 1558), and Renate Neumüller-Klausner's list of twenty-nine representations in art of so-called *Wunderbücher* (if books so bound that they could be taken out of a bag) which augments the catalogue (447 entries) published by Lisl and Hugo Alker in the *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* in 1978.

German topics predominate. Nevertheless English readers will find a number of items to interest them. Norman Blake, following his article in 1977 on the printing of Cotton's *Bruges practice* in regard to the use of prologues and epilogues, now examines Cotton's Westminster practice and his changing approach to text presentation, showing him to have been "a clever promoter of books" but "not sufficient of a scholar-printer" to develop a routine system of text presentation. Anthony Edwards investigates the relationship between author and printer as it is revealed through Wynkin de Worde's publication of the works of Stephen Hawes. Frederick Avis examines aspects of recruitment to printing in London in the sixteenth century, looking for example at the role of foreign workmen and the "translation" of men to the Stationers' Company from other crafts and guilds. D. N. S. Pears examines English binders on five early sixteenth-century continental books, a study which she hopes will mark the beginning of a more systematic inquiry into the extent to which continental printers relied upon the English market and, conversely, the extent to which English binders were dependent on European suppliers.

## Instructive intent

We know more about the author and the history of the *Hyperion* machine than we do about the original edition of 1439. Martin Lowry has recently argued persuasively about the circumstances in which Aldus was persuaded to print such a (for him) unusual book but the identity of its illustrator is still not known for certain, and work has scarcely yet begun on establishing why the printer might have been so attracted to books whose format was so obviously aimed at a new kind of dilettante book collector. As a specimen of printing this new facsimile leaves much to be desired since most of the original details have been lost.

The Hounslow Press, Toronto, has recently published the first bibliography devoted to the works of the Algerian Blackwood, *Blackwood's Books* by John Robert Colombo (1999, \$8.95, 0-88882 003 0). In addition to listing the different impressions and editions of Blackwood's works, the volume also provides a list of his books by year of publication, an alphabetical list of stories with locations, a brief life of Blackwood with an account of his visits to Canada, a catalogue of his works of his that have appeared in the theatre and on radio and television, an essay on Blackwood by Walter Gillings and a select bibliography of critical works.

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